

# forward fmotion

January - February 1987

A Socialist Magazine

## THE PHILIPPINES: New Dangers, New Opportunities

with E. San Juan, Juan Maria Sison,  
and Julio Rivera

OLD VISIONS,  
NEW VISIONS,  
FOR LABOR



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Celia Wcislo is President of SEIU Local 285, representing clerical workers and nurses throughout Massachusetts.

## Prospects for Labor Old Visions/New Visions

by Celia Wcislo

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The changes—occupational and technological—which checked the advance of trade unionism in the last decade appear likely to continue in the same direction. It is hazardous to prophesize, but I see no reason to believe that American trade unionism will so revolutionize itself within a short period of time as to become in the next decade a more potent social influence than it has been in the past decade. (George Barnett, Presidential Address to the American Economics Assoc.)<sup>1</sup>

Many of us today look back romantically to the 30's and 40's as a time of growth and vitality for the U.S. labor movement. The CIO successfully organized on an industrial basis, the left was in an alliance with sections of the trade union aristocracy, and all looked right with the world. Today we face a gloomy forecast for the labor movement—one that has many people prophesizing (like George Barnett does) the slow death of the trade union movement.

Yet history teaches us many things. The romantic glow we give to the 30's and 40's hides from us the dismal and declining place of the labor movement in the 20's and 30's. Barnett's speech was not about the unions of today; it was delivered in 1932! It was a time of drastic and radical changes in the



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economy, in the labor force, in technology and in corporate structures. A depression had destroyed the livelihoods of millions. Employee representation plans (essentially, early QWL's) were advocated as a new vision of "welfare capitalism"...a new vision of democracy and a union-free environment. It was a dreadful time, but a time of transition in which the left-wing of labor was able to play a crucial role, setting labor on a different path.

Today we live under the rules and roles that came out of this new vision of the 30's. As the AFL and CIO merged, as the gains of the 30's and 40's became consolidated in the social compact of the 50's, a new labor relations complex was established. That social compact had trade-offs and advantages; it is this compact that we have seen crumbling around us over the last decade.

## The Social Contract of the 1950's

To fully understand what impact current changes are having on the work force and the labor movement, we need to more closely look at the pattern of labor relations which was established in the 50's. It is *that* pattern of relations that is being ripped asunder. It looked something like this:

### 1) Labor's 1950's Vision:

\* The acceptance of the right to make a profit. Capitalism was a fine system, as long as organized labor got its share of the pie:

We seek an ever rising standard of living...And so we are dedicated to freedom, not only political but also economic, through a system of private enterprise. We believe in the American profit system. We believe in free competition. The American private-enterprise system, despite some defects, has achieved far greater results for wage earners than any other social system in history. (George Meany, 1955)<sup>2</sup>

\* Support by the AFL-CIO for U.S. military policies and defense spending; perpetrating big-nation chauvinism (collaborating in world-wide corporate expansion); support for protectionist legislation.

\* Reliance on the Democratic Party for political clout; junior partner in the New Deal coalition.

\* Destruction of the left-led unions and other left forces in the AFL and CIO.

### 2) Labor's 1950's Face:

\* Broad organization of large manufacturing corporations; light industry, service and public sector left unorganized; creation of "big" labor and "little" labor which was divided predominately along racial and sexual lines reflecting the job segregation that meant blue collar equals white male; a large wage gap between large manufacturing jobs and other sectors; allowing the South to remain unorganized; power base of the AFL-CIO relying on the craft/maunufacturing unions, with a secondary role for service sector unions.

\* Less reliance on legislated solutions (like minimum wage laws or the 8-hour day), and moves towards winning benefits on a contract by contract basis (health insurance, vacation, disability) so that labor became seen as those folks who are organized, not those outside of a union.

### 3) Labor's 1950's Voice:

\* Models of bargaining that were suited for large industrial manufacturing: pattern bargaining and the model auto formula, COLAs and minimum wages; wage competition within this sector effectively minimized by this form of bargaining, but with only a limited spill-over effect into other sectors.

\* Various institutional supports for unions such as dues check-off, the N.L.R.A., grievance and arbitration procedures and the right to exclusive representation; labor's willingness to accept a limited right to strike in exchange for extended contracts.

\* The establishment of union work rules to limit the abuses of Taylor-model production methods (that is, production that involved work subdivided into the simplest function so that less control resided in any single worker; pay for job performed, not for particular skills or knowledge). Unions achieved some modified seniority rights to jobs, along with work rules to oversee the job-bidding process and the tasks actually performed.

\* Labor gave up the fight for control over the shop floor production process, quality control and productivity,<sup>3</sup> in exchange for higher wages and job security.

## Big Changes

American trade unionists today contend with dramatic transformations of the national economy hampered by rules of the game drawn under different economic and political conditions. While this article will not attempt to define in detail the economic changes that have been occurring, it might be helpful to highlight some of the most significant changes:<sup>4</sup>

\* The growing influence of other advanced capitalist and third world economies on world markets; the rise of world-wide capitalist competition; the growing internationalization of capital; the growing U.S. debt and shift in balance of trade; the impact of foreign industries on internal U.S. markets (like auto).

\* A revolution in technology and communications; the ability to move capital and production across state lines and national boundaries; the rise of automation and shift from labor intensive to capital intensive manufacturing; the shift from mass production methods to those of flexible specialization and the resulting impact on methods of production.<sup>5</sup>

\* The loss of the Viet Nam War by the U.S. and the resulting impact on U.S. hegemony over the rest of the world.

\* Lack of investment by U.S. corporations in smokestack industries; the resulting decline of our industrial base, and the shift from manufacturing to service industries; the impact of this shift on jobs, occupations, and the historical blue collar base of the AFL-CIO.<sup>6</sup>

\* The trend toward corporate mergers (paper transactions) and diversification of corporations; new and unregulated forms of stock and lending speculation causing instability in the financial institutions.

\* The further division of the workforce into "big" and "little" labor, with this division reflecting

both racial and sexual characteristics; the impact of the civil rights movement and the women's movement on the labor force (affirmative action, comparable worth); the important role that "little" labor has played in allowing the expansion of the service sector.<sup>7</sup>

\* Deregulation of many industries (airlines, trucking, banking, etc.) and the resulting growth of non-union competition; the demise of pattern bargaining and national contracts (Teamsters, UMW, Steel), increase of plant closings, more severe concessionary bargaining.



\* A shift in political ideologies of both major parties toward more conservative, right wing ideas; the control of the presidency by the Republicans; the rightward motion of the Democratic Party and its loss of national influence (end of the New Deal coalition).

\* A breakdown of the old patterns of labor relations, with the new tendency to be anti-union, hostile, concessionary; a gutting of the NLRB and harsher treatment of union organizers; a decline in the number of union members to below 18% nationally; growth of QWL or "cooperative" programs along with the willingness of corporations to instigate and wait out strikes.

## The Failure of the 50's Vision

The premise of the AFL-CIO since its merger in the 50's was that labor and management were to share in the fruits of capitalist enterprise. When profits grew, wages were to go up. Workers' wages



thus tailed company profits. The American economy was able to expand until the 1970's. At that point, with American business challenged from abroad, the logical outgrowth of the AFL-CIO vision was that the workers' salaries must again tail corporate revenues—i.e., concessions. With the increase of job loss, the fight for better wages became the fight to save jobs and to hold onto what was gained in the past. Corporations hoped to regain their superior position in world markets by sacrificing the "superior" position of U.S. workers relative to workers in the rest of the world. Even profitable companies used the growing competitive environment to push wages down—as in the Hormel case.

As multinationals developed worldwide, American workers found themselves competing in a global economy. Where competition had before been associated with economic growth and expansion (read world domination), today American workers are facing competition that threatens their very livelihood. Fears of foreign competition have led to AFL-CIO "Buy-American" campaigns. Even progressive unionists from the Midwest cringe at the thought of buying a Toyota. And it is that same fear of foreign competition that has been able to split labor's ranks nationally. Pattern bargaining and master contracts have all but vanished in much of steel, mining, trucking and auto. Even the service sector is being impacted by this trend towards plant-by-plant competition. Kaiser of California recently had to swallow both a two-tier wage structure for new employees as well as a regional wage structure that varied throughout the state!

By accepting the notion that collective bargaining was limited to wages, hours and conditions of work, the postwar labor leadership gave up any claims on management's right to manage: "For the A.F. of L., I can say flatly that collective bargaining is not a means of seeking a voice in management. We do not want so-called 'co-determination...'" (George Meany, 1955).<sup>8</sup>

So when management began to cry that work rules and the division of labor at work were tying management's hands, making products unprofitable, labor had little to respond with. Rules built up over thirty years of assembly-line production could vanish in one round of negotiations. For example, quality of worklife circles introduced alternative models of workplace democracy which began to eat away at the



### GUESS WHO'S ON ROTATING SHIFTS?

workrule foundations of many industrial contracts. The rules developed to restrain the worst assembly-line abuses did not solve the inherent problems of that method of production. By breaking down work into the simplest of tasks, Taylorism made work boring and helping management keep labor replaceable and inexpensive. QWL's spoke to the frustration many workers had with this method of production. It challenged the isolation, the lack of control, the lack of investment in human resources (read training and skill), the lack of decision-making and responsibility given to production-line workers.

But because labor refused to have any role in managing work and production, it has not developed alternatives to counter the QWL hype. Who supervises if production is to be done by a team? If production levels and quality control are management's terrain, shouldn't management be allowed to reward folks who are more productive or have quality suggestions (i.e., merit systems)? And if you are expected to be more flexible in a team method of production, shouldn't you be paid on the basis of your knowledge of various skills (pay-for-knowledge), and not for the particular job you perform? And isn't this just the mind set the UAW got itself into when it began to negotiate at the Saturn plant?<sup>9</sup>

### A New Vision, New Face and New Voice

Many of us who have stumbled along in, out or alongside socialist organizations, have spent the last few years humbled by the failure of the left, yet dedicated to continue socialist work in the trade unions. Some of us just lost sight of where we were headed. We have become good trade unionists, but how many of us could call ourselves tribunes of the people? Without a new vision, voice and face to our work, it will be hard to move ahead from our roles solely as good trade unionists.

In some ways, we have been plodding along, pushing our work and our members slowly to the left. This shift can be seen as more and more folks win trade union office, gain local support for resolutions against intervention in Central America, or get the local more involved in local politics or community issues. But pushing our work to the left implies that the weight *on* our work is actually the drag to the right so we spend our energies moving away from it. Another model would be to create a left pole within the labor movement, one that acts as a countervailing force to the pole on the right and has a different set of policies and politics.

In the 30's, a left pole crystallized around industrial organizing of large-scale manufacturing and eventually took the form of the CIO's emergence from within the AFL. Many activists today are looking to organizational models outside today's AFL-CIO. The National Rank and File Against Concessions, the Solidarity Networks (like the Labor Support Project), and the initial attempts of the P-9ers to set up an independent meatpackers union have all been attempts to build organization outside of the AFL. While I would probably agree with most of the criticisms raised about the present state of organization of unions today, I think it is premature to draw the conclusion that independent national labor organizations are the cure for labor's ills. Recently, P-9 members have begun to question their strategy of forming an independent local. NRFAC seems to exist only on paper. And the Labor Support Project remains confused about how it is different than/similar to what a progressive labor council should be. There is no way around the struggle that needs to be waged within the AFL-CIO for the hearts and minds of American workers. Our pole will crystallize around that battle.

### A New Vision

The recent paper by the AFL-CIO defines the current vision of the leadership of organized labor: Unions are, first and foremost, organizations seeking to improve the lives of those they represent by improving their conditions of work and by insuring respect for their dignity as workers...that each worker is entitled to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work...We understand that confrontation and conflict are wasteful and that a cooperative approach to solving shared and present and future problems is desirable.<sup>10</sup>

This vision is fundamentally flawed. Without our being able to articulate the nature of classes in America, the necessity of the conflict between labor and capital, we will find ourselves again and again trying to rationalize concessions and changes in work rules. "Without struggle, there can be no progress."





Conflict cannot be avoided if we are to win a raise these days; it cannot be avoided if we are to question the right of capital to run society. Who stands to gain, and who stands to lose from each new two-tier wage structure, or change in work rules, is of immediate interest to all who work.

Our vision must go beyond an anti-concessions posture. It must be a vision that raises the fundamental question of who controls the country's capital resources. The union movement is in a weak position to directly challenge the force of the "free marketplace." But we must challenge and expose that marketplace, through every battle we're involved in. That does not mean every fight is a fight to the death. But it does explain why some fights (such as Hormel, TWA, and Watsonville) become fights to the end for power and control in a workforce. They become symbols of the class struggle that is taking place in the economic arena. Our vision must be able to describe, define and predict the nature and direction of that conflict; and we must be the leaders willing to lead in the fight.

The influence and power of capital has now become global in nature. While the AFL-CIO has been willing to recognize this fundamental shift in the corporate game, its solutions still look to the past, and is fortified by a national chauvinism that has a vision of the USA in the center of the world map.<sup>11</sup> A recent *Harvard Business Review* advertisement for the Harvard Business School dramatically summarizes how the corporate world views the new economic realities:

Today new business practices are penetrating international boundaries with increasing ease and speed, outdating many of the tactics of multinationalism creating the need to make international business decisions with a view to world oneness. Many have called this new perspective *worldbusiness*.<sup>12</sup>

Instead of creating a tariff wall around the U.S. to buttress a sagging imperial fortress, labor should counter the notion and power of "worldbusiness" with internationalist demands that place the needs of those who work before the needs of "worldbusiness."

First, the issues of job loss and the destruction of America's smokestack industries should not be answered with protectionist restrictions, or Buy-America campaigns. The underlying operating principles of such a view is that America must be #1 again. Instead we should advocate a self-sufficient

(that is, an economy with a manufacturing base), planned economy. It might mean calling for investment in emerging industries, or the subsidizing of critical industries. It would call for national planning (instead of the anarchy of the free market), and the right of people to have control over capital (such as limits on capital flight, etc.). In many cases, it will mean a demand to nationalize an industry, or to do regional economic planning as is going on in the Naugatuck Valley Project and with the Steel Valley Authority.<sup>13</sup> This need for socially responsible economic planning will carry over into the service sector also. The current chaos in the health care industry has already given rise to a demand for a national health system. We should be leading the call for such a system as the only effective counter to the pole of a "competitive" health care. While we might for a time feel like a voice in the wind, the ideological struggle over the choice of "the road not taken" will position us to lead struggles, as the victims of "competitive" health care increase.<sup>14</sup>

A second difference that an internationalist perspective will bring is a criticism and breaking with American foreign policy. The AFL-CIO, through AIFLD, has made itself a tool of imperialist foreign policy. Union funds are being used to undercut and overthrow governments. As the rightward swing of the government continues, a countervailing pull to the left will find a growing audience. The present Con-tractate circus is a prime example of opportunities ahead. Most outside observers remark that the present debate within the trade union movement over Central America and South Africa is the most heated (and divided) debate over foreign policy that the AFL-CIO has ever seen.<sup>15</sup> We should build this division. And as the growth of public sector and service unions continue, the old balance of power within state federations, as well as nationally, will only help us to increase this chasm, and possible lead to a shifting of power on the national level. Political fights over defense spending vs. domestic spending may turn into major policy rifts.

The third impact of *worldsolidarity* on our trade union work will develop as national unions work together to take on multinational corporations. The strike of South African workers in support of 3-M workers in the U.S. is an example. Recognizing real possibilities here, the November 1986 Labor Notes conference had as a major focus, promotion of the



Members and supporters of COSATU march to 1986 May Day celebration in Black township of Soweto. South African workers and their unions were a moving force in the struggle for freedom and democracy in 1986. AP

general idea of international solidarity. But there is more to be gained from the growing contact with new trade union movements. Many of the emerging union movements in the third world (those countries to which U.S. corporations are moving production plants) are also countries in the middle of nationalist revolts. The trade union movements of those countries are developing a form of trade unionism that is directly tied to national struggles for independence. Whether it is the Council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) or the Philippines' Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), these new union organizations have been willing to look beyond their factory walls and place themselves in the center of national political struggles. If we hope to see similar changes in U.S. unions, our unions will have to root themselves in the national struggles of this country.

Recognition of the significance of the national struggles can have a direct bearing on the future direction of U.S. labor. While many folks are still talking about that dreamed of labor party, many have blinded themselves the emerging political influence of the national struggle of the Black Liberation Movement. The development of Rainbow politics, and the willingness of the left pole of labor to work within that Rainbow, could be a major step towards splitting the Democratic Party, organizing the South, as well as changing the face and "special (white?) interest" stereotype of American trade unions. Learning from the experience of third world trade unions can possibly open our eyes to the reality of the American political struggle. Fighting apartheid in South Africa makes it harder to avoid the color line at home.



## A New Face

*The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions* recognizes the changing "face" of labor. But the AFL-CIO only proposes the palest of solutions to this problem. They focus on the upper (professional) levels of labor to replace the "middle class" forces they have lost. They have put association mergers ahead of new-shop organizing. By developing associate memberships, by taking up "new" issues such as pay equity and health and safety, they hope to attract new members. And if that doesn't work, they are willing to market credit cards and life insurance<sup>16</sup>. And most significantly, while the South is mentioned as an area of potential growth, the conclusion of the AFL-CIO seems to be that no progress will be made there until labor law reform is passed, and that won't happen until labor gets more politically active and elects a Democrat President (even though Jimmy Carter didn't do much) and...

This period is an opportunity to organize new forces into the labor movement who could fundamentally challenge the image (and appearance) of the trade union movement. This will not happen by offering credit cards. The old phrase about going lower and deeper is true more today than ever. We should put much of our efforts and resources into organizing, and organizing in those areas and industries that are predominated by women and national minorities. But this organizing will only be successful if we take up issues that touch the heart of the social movements which have spoken for those potential members. Issues such as comparable worth, maternity leave, affirmative action, part-time work and benefits are all part of a new labor agenda.

The continued white blindness of the AFL-CIO means that it plans to write off the South for the next decade, even if the statistics they commissioned say this is wrong.<sup>17</sup> While we should push aggressively for labor law reform, we cannot wait until reform happens to organize the South. Instead we should tie into the political movements that are already taking place in Black communities. The work of Black Workers for Justice is an example of organizing that recognizes the place of the Black church and community organization in any workplace struggles.<sup>18</sup>

Carrying things a step further, the only times significant headway has been made in organizing the South was when the struggle for rights on the job

were directly tied with the struggle for political rights of Afro-Americans.<sup>19</sup> Martin Luther King was assassinated while going to speak at an AFSCME strike of black sanitation workers. 1199 made headway in hospital organizing because of its direct connection to the Civil Rights Movement. In 1984, Jesse Jackson stormed through the South registering people to vote, and to rebel against the conservative southern Democratic machine. If we act boldly, we could tie that organizing to vote for Jesse, to voting for unions, to the fight for rights on the job. The impact the organizing of the South could have on the trade union movement could be as significant as the CIO organizing of the 30's.

This might be too big a dream. But just as John Lewis had to look to communist organizers in the 20-30's to break from the AFL craft perspective, today we can be positioned to lead in the organizing of the 90's. Bolstered by statistics like Medoff and Freeman's on preferences for unionization,<sup>20</sup> successful organizing work today may well define the path that labor takes tomorrow. Labor might finally break with the white chauvinist policies of the past.

## *One of organized labor's problems is that it doesn't know how to follow.*

Another role must be to lead the fight to make sure the leadership of organized labor begins to reflect the broader face of the American workforce. We should have a conscious agenda to promote and develop people of color and women. A recent P-9 event in Boston had a platform that was filled by nine white men and one Portuguese woman. The progressive wing of the union movement must work to place a representative face of labor before the people. We should pick a battle over the "face" of labor, both internally, and externally (in who gets organized). Our pole should project the power of the Rainbow; we should bring the Rainbow into the union movement.

## A New Voice

The voice of the AFL-CIO has weakened over the last decades. It is bureaucratic, relying on the legal/professional expertise of a few and not the

power of the many. Money has replaced organization in political activity. Binding arbitration is seen as the "solution" to the conflict of strikes. Labor lost its political independence as it tied itself to the Democratic Party. That voice doesn't work any more. It is a voice of retreat—and a retreat with no plans for regroupment. It is the voice of capitalism dressed in the work clothes of labor.

The working class in this country is fragmented, and without national organization. The voice we need to build is one that builds an independent working class unity: builds it internally (in the unions), builds it externally (between unions and community-based struggles), and builds it politically.

Internally, the labor left has always stood for democracy, rank and file activism, and militance. As we win higher union office, we must not lose sight of this emphasis. Staff-intensive unions are no different than the AFL-CIO model (even if the staff is progressive). Management prefers to negotiate with a few "qualified" professionals, not with the workers. We cannot afford the goal of becoming better professionals than those of the old guard. We need to build union committees such that management and workers deal with each other directly. As we build committees, as we plan activities, we have to focus on empowering working class members to change their lives.

We also have to be willing to step out of the way as new leaders emerge. We have a special role in developing leadership that is multinational and that includes women. It will be the development of such leadership on the local level which will give us the resources to challenge the existing power structure on a regional or national level.

Externally, we must be willing to break out of the narrow union binders we often are strapped with. When the CWA and AFSCME are fighting on the state level, many of us don't know how to work "officially" on the local to local level. The Labor Support Project or P-9 Support Committee<sup>21</sup> are attempts to breakout of the straight-jackets of narrow unionism. Even honoring picketlines and strike support (like PATCO) takes on national significance when we break some of the "rules."

As strikes and concessions batter us, most have recognized the need for solidarity. State federations are called on weekly to bring support to picket lines. The AFL-CIO Evolution of Work Committee recog-

nized the weakness of local organizational structures to meet these growing pressures, and recommended that more monies be put into the state federations and central labor bodies. While this is again the old answer of throwing money at a problem, the problem is important.

## *The impact the organizing of the South could have on the trade union movement could be as significant as the CIO organizing of the 1930's.*

As national or master contracts are destroyed, there may be a growing emphasis on regional power. Again, the growing interest of some of the old "rustbelt" regions in regional economic planning<sup>22</sup> might point the way forward. The struggles for power in state bodies or central labor councils might take on tremendous importance. We need to experiment with regional forms as well as get involved in the regional forms that exist. In England, the left was able to dominate the Greater London Council (until Thatcher abolished it). Solidarnosc in Poland was designed not on an industrial basis, but on a regional model. We should look to other models for possible answers, and not solely battle within the structural limits of what exists.

But building unity within the working class (as compared to building it only within *organized* labor) means that we must learn to work more closely with community organizations and enter into alliances. New strategies are being developed, many of them highlighting the political nature of many workplace struggles. The conscious development of worker/community alliances should be emphasized. While this might mean taking workplace issues out to the community, or enlisting the community in workplace struggles as H.E.R.E. has successfully done in Boston and at Yale, it must not be one-sided. A Solidarity coalition cannot be dominated solely by labor. The issues of the community must be brought by labor activists into the workplace. Whether it is over hazardous waste or police brutality, a coalition must be built that unites both those within unions, and those without.<sup>23</sup> Our goal must not be solely trade unionist solidarity, but class solidarity.



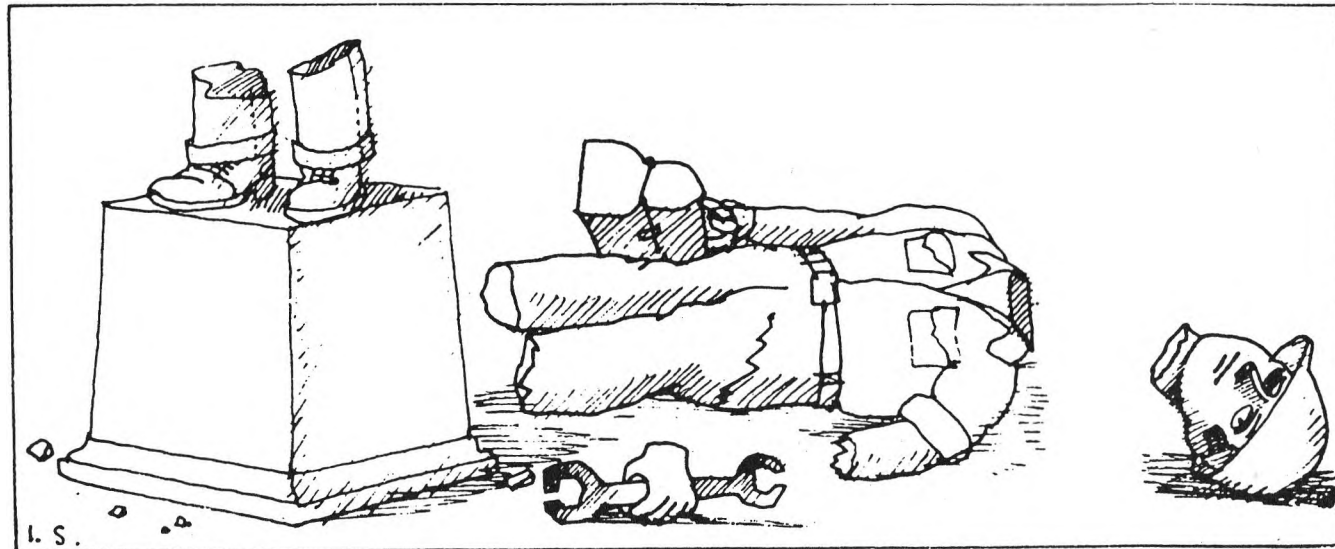
Politically, again the emphasis should be on building independent working class power and unity. Independence today means a break from the hold of the Democratic Party, or at a minimum building a progressive power-block within the party. Folks are beginning to talk about building a labor party again. While no one would argue that a labor party wouldn't be a huge advantage, we also need to be able to look where the motion for change is now happening. Within and without the Democratic Party, the Black Liberation Movement has turned its struggle for power into the electoral arena, with the movement for Rainbow politics.

We can talk of labor's need for political independence. But building such a party must be done in the context of surrounding political movements of the day. And in 1988, Jesse Jackson's run for the presidency could signal a surge forward for independent Rainbow politics. Labor should be building a relationship with the Rainbow...a relationship that does not *assume* labor's dominance. To build a lasting relationship between labor and the Civil Rights Movement, we must be working with and within the

Rainbow today.

In the 1930's, progressive unions and union activists who were facing the aftermath of a depression and the restructuring of the industrial revolution were able to envision a labor movement built on industrial unionism; a unionism that look beyond the craft unionism of the AF of L. From this vision the CIO was born, the social contract of the 50's and the AFL-CIO of today. Progressive unionists of this decade can again play a pivotal role in providing a new vision and direction for labor. This vision will build on the gains of the last half-century, but also learn from the mistakes in that vision.

Facing a global challenge of *worldbusiness*, we must begin to consolidate our work into a new vision, face and voice for labor. A vision that dares to challenge the right and authority of capital to control our lives. A face that truly represents the rainbow character of the American working class. And a voice that fights to build up class unity, that is capable of giving independent expression to our needs and aspirations. ■



Isadora Seltzer

## Notes

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- 13) Jeremy Brecher, "If All the People Banded Together: The Naugatuck Valley Project," *Labor Research Review*, #9, Fall 1986, pp. 1-17. Mike Stout, "Reindustrialization from Below," *ibid.*, pp.19-33.
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- 16) AFL-CIO, *ibid.*
- 17) Richard Freeman and James Medoff, New York, 1984. Tables 2-1 and 2-2.

- 18) Black Workers for Justice, *New Trade Unionism: A Bold Voice for Labor*, July 1986.
- 19) Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, Boston, 1983. pp. 29-44.
- 20) AFL-CIO, *ibid.* Medoff and Freeman, *ibid.*, Tables 2-1 and 2-2.
- 21) The Labor Support Project is an organization in the Greater Boston area that developed to provide strike support to Greyhound workers. It has expanded to provide resources, strike support, and community outreach to local labor struggles. The P-9 Support Committee developed around support for striking Hormel workers and their families. It operates nationally, with local committees in various regions.
- 22) See for example, the articles cited in *Labor Research Review*, #9.
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# The Philippines

The upheaval in the Philippines surrounding the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos was one of the most dramatic political events of 1986 and will continue to be of great political interest and importance in 1987. There is a lot to learn from a situation so volatile and complex, in which class forces and contradictions develop and change monthly, in which the people are well-organized and still very much inspired by the demonstrable power of a popular movement, in which many forms of struggle—both legal and extra-legal—are combined, and in which the communist Left is such a major actor.

Framed by the Olalia assassination, the Ramos-engineered removal of Enrile and the signing of the 60-day ceasefire agreement, the immediate situation confronts the revolutionary Left with enormous op-

portunities and dangers. As New People's Army fighters return to their villages and cities and are welcomed as heroes throughout the land, there is an obvious danger that the military will identify and target thousands of activists in preparation for its post-ceasefire offensive. The revolutionary underground, which has served the movement so well during the past seventeen years of armed struggle, risks serious damage during this truce.

Yet as Brig. Gen. D.T. Rio (regional commander for several central island provinces) gripes, "I see in the cease-fire an opportunity on the part of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army to project themselves nationally and internationally. It also gives them a chance to consolidate their forces" (as quoted in *The Boston Globe*,

12/11/86). The ceasefire presents the CPP with an unparalleled opportunity for widespread popular political education and mobilization, especially in the major cities. Taking advantage of forms of struggle hitherto denied them, the CPP and the National Democratic Front can publicize their programs in ways unimaginable under Marcos. They can extend and consolidate their bases in order to strengthen their hand for the conflicts to come.

The following three articles all shed light on features of the current Filipino conjuncture, from the contradictions among the ruling class fractions to the strengths and weaknesses of the communist opposition. The first article, by E. San Juan, Jr., responds directly to the events immediately surrounding the Olalia assassination and Enrile ouster. He also focuses on problems within the Left and has particularly sharp words for those within the movement still advocating approaches which undermine the revolutionary Left's role in a broad united front. For San Juan's views on earlier events see the February-March '86 and April-May '86 issues of *Forward Motion*. He has also recently published a book entitled *Crisis in the Philippines: The Making of a Revolution*, available from Bergin & Garvey Publishers, 670 Amherst Rd., South Hadley, MA 01075.

The second article is an excerpt from a speech given by Jose Maria Sison in late August 1986 at the founding convention of the Partido ng Bayan (PnB: People's Party), a broad electoral party initiated by the Left to take advantage of the democratic space opened up with Marcos' ouster. A founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines and probably its leading theoretician, Sison was released by the Aquino government after many years of imprisonment under Marcos. How long this democratic opening will be enjoyed by Filipino progressives is in doubt, but with what San Juan calls its "permanent base of 50,000 members," the Partido ng Bayan can be expected to play a major role in the coming events.

Our third feature is an interview with Julio Rivera, a Filipino activist who recently spent a month in the Philippines. His comments focus on the reassessment by the CPP of its work surrounding the Marcos ouster. Rivera also discusses the divisions among the Filipino ruling fractions and the opportunities these present to the CPP. His comments were made before and anticipate many of the recent events analyzed in the San Juan article.

The lively political thinking and debate going on in the Filipino Left right now—in the Philippines as well as abroad—are a sign of enormous health and vitality. The ability of the CPP to assess its weaknesses and correct its mistakes in the midst of an incredibly complex and volatile situation bode well for the future of the Filipino revolutionary struggle. It is, after all, the massive popular insurgency led by the Communist Party of the Philippines which has set the stage for all the amazing events of the past year, beginning with the ouster of the dictator Marcos. In future issues of *Forward Motion* we intend to publish more of this stimulating and encouraging discussion. We hope especially to print further reactions of Filipino activists to the views presented here.—*FM Editors*





## New Dangers, New Opportunities

# Revolutionary Struggle in the Philippines

by E. San Juan, Jr.

In the space of less than two weeks, from November 13—when the mutilated body of Rolando Olalia, chairman of the Partido ng Bayan (PnB: People's Party) and of the KMU (May First Movement) was found, a victim of military "salvaging"—to November 23, when President Corazon Aquino dismissed the recalcitrant Minister Enrile, self-confessed architect of Marcos' martial rule, a new political conjuncture has taken shape in the Philippines.

Key to this shift in intra-elite alignment of forces is the U.S. government, acting through the Chief of Staff General Fidel Ramos. (Through the Joint U.S.-Philippines Military Advisory Group formed in 1947, the U.S. exercises institutional control over the Philippine military at all levels, from strategic to combat.) In exchange for quashing the alleged coup plotted by Enrile and his clique, Gen. Ramos extracted from Aquino a list of concessions (similar to those for which Enrile had been vociferously calling), including the purging of liberal or left-of-center democrats in her administration, and a greater say by the military on state policies and executive decisions. Practically all the U.S. mass media noted that Aquino, indebted to Gen. Ramos for staying in power, has now become dependent on him and his cohorts.

Reagan and the State Dept. immediately expressed pleasure at this turn of events: "We reiterate our strong and unequivocal support for Pres. Aquino and her administration" (see *Los Angeles Times* report in *Hartford Courant*, Nov. 24). Senator Lugar, head of the influential Foreign Relations Committee, stated that Aquino "is the only unifying factor in Philippine politics... Mrs. Aquino is receiving assurances everyday from the U.S. government of one hundred per cent support." This support, chiefly military supplies

and logistics, totals \$200 million FY1986, plus a supplement of \$200 million after her speech to Congress last Sept. 18.

We should recall that given the enormous stakes in the Philippines—chiefly the strategic Clark Field Air Base and Subic Naval Base—the U.S. did support the Enrile-Ramos military revolt against Marcos last Feb. 22. But primarily because Aquino had signed the Dec. 1984 Convenor's Agreement of Filipino oppositionists pledging to remove the U.S. bases, the Reagan administration withheld its endorsement until her accession to power was a *fait accompli*. In order to preempt her nationwide call for a Feb. 26 mass action (a call fully supported by KMU and BAYAN [New Nationalist Alliance], the chief progressive groups), the U.S.—through the machinations of the CIA, the U.S. Embassy and trouble-shooter Philip Habib—sponsored and encouraged the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) to destabilize the Marcos regime. This set the stage for the U.S. denial of continued support for Marcos.

This strategy was repeated last week. Olalia was assassinated just after he announced that the movement would defend Aquino against an Enrile-inspired coup. When KMU and the progressive movement staged a funeral march of over 500,000 people last Nov. 20 and vowed support for Aquino, U.S. operatives apprehended the dramatically accelerated nationalist-democratic pressure on Aquino that might entrench the liberal reformists and push her to the

left. Two days afterward, Gen. Ramos presented Aquino with what are in essence Enrile's demands: Ramos and Enrile share the same world-view and ideology, notwithstanding differences in personal style or temperament. Aquino had no choice. Because she wouldn't call on the fabled "people power" that saved Enrile-Ramos last February and catapulted her to power—KMU and BAYAN publicly offered her their bodies—she was left to depend on the same repressive military which Marcos used to terrorize the people and imprison and murder her husband.

To what extent Aquino's populist reforms (the little there are) have been jeopardized, and her subordination to the military sealed, remains to be seen.

Since February, both Enrile and Ramos have opposed Aquino's dialogue with the left. With accelerated counter-insurgency operations in the countryside, the arrest of Communist Party leader Rodolfo Salas, and the murder of Olalia, they have continuously sabotaged the cease-fire talks between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF), the umbrella group representing the national democratic forces. Whether the sixty-day ceasefire signed Nov. 27 will hold or be implemented satisfactorily remains to be seen.

Overall, the U.S. has strengthened its position by eliminating the volatile, Marcos-tainted Enrile and firmed up its military solution to the insurgency problem through the intervention of Gen. Ramos. With the appointment of retired General Rafael Ileto as Enrile's successor, the U.S. has positioned one



U.S. Navy

The U.S. has enormous stakes in the Philippines where Subic Naval Base (above) and Clark Field Air Base are located.

E. San Juan, Jr., is a leading Filipino activist in the United States, member of Friends of the Filipino People, and author of *Crisis in the Philippines: The Making of a Revolution*, published this year by Bergen and Garvey.



more "professional" to further its goal of streamlining the military to make it an efficient killer of Filipino rebels and dissidents. A West Point graduate, veteran of the Huk-suppression campaign of the fifties and trained by CIA-operatives like Lansdale during Magsaysay's presidency, Ileta is sure to refurbish the "civic action" component of the counter-insurgency program, utilizing all the latest schemes like the "low-intensity warfare" used in Central America, disinformation, etc.

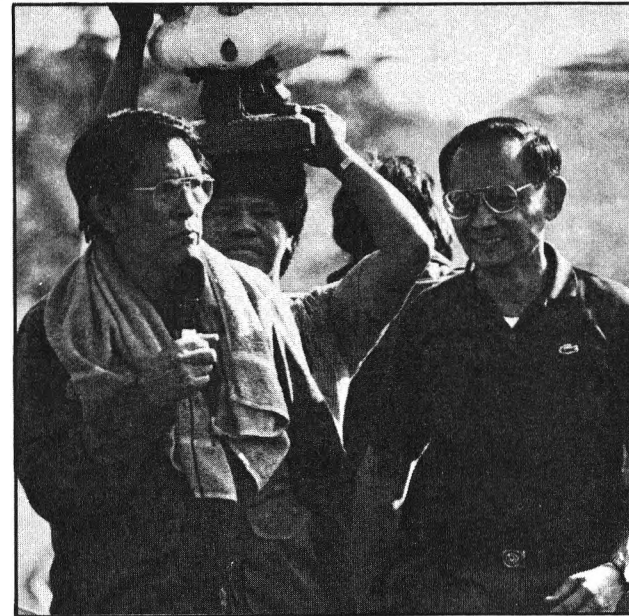
Recent communications from Manila have revealed the following facts: first, in the two weeks the crisis occurred, Major General John Singlaub, head of the World Anti-Communist League and prime patron of the Nicaraguan Contras, was seen in Manila (together with an A.I.D. official) conferring with Enrile, Ramos and other government advisers, including the reactionary brother of Aquino and her chief confidant, Jose "Peping" Cojuangco. This re-plays Habib's timely "mediation" between Marcos and Enrile last February.

Second, Olalia's killers are now known to come from a military detachment in Enrile's bailiwick in the Cagayan Valley, but no steps have been taken to apprehend the suspects; the panel of investigators appointed by Aquino includes military officials. Third, with the "Contras" already installed in the military and state bureaucracy, a "creeping coup" has been initiated that will purge all nationalist/progressive elements in the state apparatuses, mount a gradual suppression of all legal mass organizations (like KMU and BAYAN), and establish fascist rule behind Aquino's populist facade.

Finally, I have also been informed that Aquino's newly-drafted constitution up for a plebiscite in February may be in jeopardy. One should remember that Senator Robert Dole strongly opposed more aid to Aquino on the ground that this constitution prohibits nuclear weapons anywhere in the Philippines, and stipulates that the U.S. bases can remain only up to 1991—unless government-to-government negotiations prolongs their stay. Should these predictions come true, the ceasefire agreement will be the first casualty. Full-blast repression may be unleashed, death-squads given blanket freedom to operate, and *de jure* if not *de facto* martial law realized. The limited "democratic space" now enjoyed by the people will be a memory of the past.

If indeed Aquino finds herself constrained, if not

dictated to, by the U.S.—manipulated military and submits to becoming a figurehead, what are the opportunities for political mobilization in the cities? While the warlord Enrile revives the moribund Nacionalista Party and regroups Marcos' followers from KBL (New Society Movement), and the military positions itself to assert hegemony over the state, what is the situation for sharpened class struggle?



Former Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Chief of Staff General Fidel Ramos. Both have opposed Aquino's dialogue with the left.

First of all, I think the NDF's implementation of principled critical support of Aquino's reformist program and the correction of certain dogmatic/sectarian tendencies (especially the boycott stand) augurs well for the struggle. By seizing the opportunities offered by this "breathing space," the movement has rectified a militarist or ruralist deviation understandable during Marcos' reign of fascist violence. It has reached broader sectors, especially the middle elements (professionals, intelligentsia, small businessmen). It has catalyzed new untapped resources, creativity, popular genius. Left adventurism has been checked; the new lessons gained will guarantee a sustained and vigorous resistance to military repression, attracting millions hitherto uninvolved in the movement's cause. Since it will take a few years to erode the vast gains of the NDF and the liberal democrats, and for the military to shed the stigma

of Marcos' corruption and brutality, I don't really foresee an immediate scrapping of bourgeois-democratic forms. So I think the constitution will be ratified, senators and representatives elected to Congress in May, and the whole economy rehabilitated to service IMF/World Bank debts and transnationals.

Contrary to Julio Rivera's opinion [see accompanying article—editors], the rectification I mentioned above involves not just tactics but the whole "democratic way of doing things in the Party" as well as in the mass organizations (see *Ang Bayan*, May 1986). The boycott mistake is a symptom of the inadequacies in applying the mass line, in conducting genuine united front work. I have not seen any analysis that goes to the root of the problem, however. If the broadest alliance is not forged soon, especially with the liberal democrats or reformists, as well as with the much-maligned "social democrats" and other middle elements (fractions of the military and police, the religious sector, etc.), the movement might find itself isolated—a vanguard moving against the will of the masses.

*Notwithstanding the manifold strengths of the grassroots organizing done by BAYAN and KMU, we have yet to reach a genuine united front, a broad coalition of progressive forces similar to the Sandinista Front in 1979...*

Judging from an NDF document on the united front before Marcos was overthrown, I think there are clear-headed analysts who can do conjunctural analysis within a historical-materialist framework. (In the document, the hold of traditional "bourgeois parliamentarianism" and elections on the "unorganized and spontaneous" opposition was acknowledged.) By "conjunctural analysis," I mean calculating the overdetermining impact of non-class factors—especially cultural and ideological—articu-

lated within the dynamics of short-term changes. One can pontificate on the dogma of "people's war" forever, but what does it concretely signify in the everyday lives of ordinary Filipinos? Despite the presence of many experienced, non-sectarian comrades in the movement, the greatest danger still remains, namely: blind, fanatical apologists who always uncritically echo the slogans and formulas without an iota of creative thinking, who are ready to quickly condemn allies and anyone else as class enemies just for raising questions or proposing revisions. These party flunkies are worse than the visible oppressors—the oligarchs and imperialists—because they represent the enemy within the ranks. Unfortunately, these functionaries still exercise some influence.

Right now, I see three mistakes still plaguing certain sections of the movement: first, the almost banal class-reductionism exemplified by the repeated charge "President Aquino comes from the landlord class, therefore....," with its correlate, an empiricist pragmatism shown in the habit of latching on to reactionary politicians if that will promote "get-rich-quick" schemes. I am always surprised to find that there are certain personalities in the movement occupying important positions who have no understanding of the "mass line," hegemonic strategy, surplus value, etc.

Second, as a symptom of past habituation to bourgeois politics, the left identifies ideological leadership (hegemony) with having trusted representatives physically controlling the hierarchy in mass organizations. We've seen this commandism wreak havoc on solidarity work here. It demonstrates lack of real hegemony. Rivera describes the NDF's urban work as "very sophisticated," but my investigations last summer belied this sophistication, with countless alienated or disillusioned militants testifying to recurrent excesses. One example is the internal dissension in GABRIELA (a federation of progressive women's organizations) and the damage inflicted by bureaucratic-commandist practices on the rank and file. Another instance, betraying a dogmatic refusal to heed the Igorot right to self-determination, is the rift with Father Conrado Balweg, an Igorot priest-guerilla.

Notwithstanding the manifold strengths of the grass-roots organizing done by BAYAN and KMU, we have yet to reach a genuine united front, a broad coalition of progressive forces similar to the Sandin-



ista Front in 1979 (when the three tendencies of Prolonged People's War, Proletarian, and Insurrectionist coalesced). At present the PnB, perceived as a front of the NDF or the Communist Party, still privileges what it calls "the basic masses" of peasants and workers, a doctrinal axiom that doesn't take into account the strategic role of the intelligentsia, the religious sector (in a predominantly Catholic nation), women and nationalities as independent or autonomous political agents. We haven't yet reached the conjunctural point of a true, authentic united front politics.

The third shortcoming I have observed follows from a rigid adherence to the primary-secondary formula, for example, parliamentary struggle is secondary, extra-legal struggle is primary. Added to this is a mechanistic or non-dialectical tendency to pursue a policy until defeat (loss of lives, imprisonment, paralysis, etc.) leads to a halt and a re-thinking. Perhaps this is a symptom of vanguardist cretinism, left in form but right in essence. Previously all efforts had been channeled into the military struggle, with a consequent neglect of political education in the cities. The reflex solution here is Mao's cultural revolution, but it is a formula more honored in the breach than in the application, and the problems of political education among the urban masses have yet to be worked out.

I can cite here the experience of our support group in the mid-seventies when the leaders refused to endorse the Moro struggle for self-determination (up to secession) until and unless they received a directive from Manila on this question. Up to this late day, some activists continue to distrust and dismiss petty bourgeois intellectuals, especially those based in the U.S., for lack of experience in the

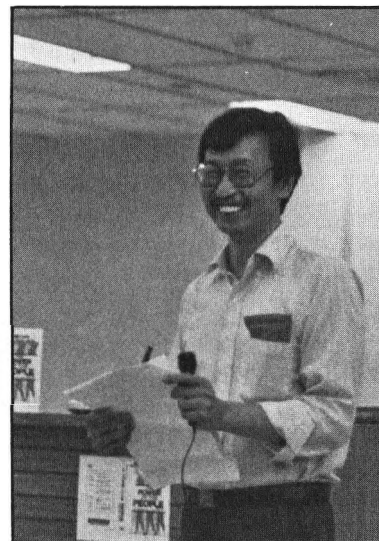
countryside.

Lest there be any misinterpretation, I should stress that my comments are made in the belief that the movement's solid strengths and virtues exceed these problems and will in time resolve them.

One evidence for this comes with the founding of PnB last August, a welcome sign of the creativity and willingness of Filipino revolutionaries to utilize conjunctural means to actualize popular democracy. In the past, elections have always been ruled out as an imperialist trick; but now their politico-educational value has been recognized, particularly given the low level of anti-imperialist consciousness and mobilizing in the whole country. With a permanent base of 50,000 members, PnB aims to work toward establishing a popular coalition government. Partly because its constitution limits the majority of its membership to workers and peasants, it cannot hope to be the united front mechanism needed to oppose Aquino's elite populism. In his speech to its inaugural audience, Sison emphasizes the educational or propaganda function of the party.

On two demands in its platform, the PnB deserves the full support of American comrades: withdrawal of U.S. bases, the main justification for intervention; and punishment of human rights violators, justice to the oppressed. I urge *Forward Motion* readers to support PnB's program either directly, or through the solidarity work of groups like the Friends of the Filipino People and the Philippine Workers Support Committee. Unless serious mistakes are committed, the PnB may successfully lay the groundwork for a wider united front that may permanently consign U.S. imperialism and its local agents to the garbage dump of pre-history. ■

—December 1, 1986



Jose Maria Sison chaired the Preparatory Commission for the founding of the Partido ng Bayan. Here are excerpts from his report to the conference in August 1986.

## Excerpts from a Speech On the Founding of the Partido ng Bayan

by Jose Maria Sison

Comrades and friends!

We are engaged in a patriotic endeavor of historic significance. It is only now that we have been able to form the reliable legal party of the movement for national freedom and popular democracy and of the Filipino people.

This party is the fruit of the well-developed legal democratic movement which includes the mass organizations of the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie, as well as the sectoral and multisectoral alliances of these mass organizations.

With a large mass base already aroused, organized and mobilized for national freedom and democracy, Partido ng Bayan has been able to immediately gather thousands of charter members. It thus emerges as one of the major legal political parties in the Philippines and as the only legal party committed to the struggle for national liberation and popular democracy against U.S. imperialism and the local reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords.

Like all other organized forces of the mass movement for democracy and national freedom, this party aims to help complete the unfinished Philippine revolution. It is determined to fight for the national and social liberation of the people from foreign and feudal domination. This party relies on and draws its membership and all-round strength from the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata of urban petty bourgeois and middle bourgeois, and fights for their rights, interests and aspirations.

It is not true that the Partido ng Bayan is strictly a party of the Left. It is a party of both the Left and the Middle. It is a



party of all the oppressed and exploited people who are fighting for their own liberation, and all round social progress.

This party has adopted and will carry out the program of upholding, promoting and defending national sovereignty and civil liberties; pushing forward economic development through genuine land reform and national reindustrialization; fostering a national, scientific and mass culture; and realizing an active, independent foreign policy.

This party is being established when all other major legal traditional parties are financed and controlled by factions of the same reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords, are susceptible or submissive to the dictates of U.S. imperialism, and committed to the preservation of the semicolonial and semifeudal system.

The Partido ng Bayan is a response to the long crying need for a legal party that can strive to break the monopoly of the exploiting classes over the electoral process and serve as the instrument of the exploited classes.

With this party arising as the legal party of the people's movement for democracy and national freedom, gone are the days when in electoral contests the national mass organizations and alliances of the people could only tail after the parties which are in fact instruments of foreign and feudal domination.

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*The Partido ng Bayan is a response to the long crying need for a legal party that can strive to break the monopoly of the exploiting classes over the electoral process.*

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In previous times, it was quite ironic that the people's democratic movement could so bitterly be divided over the question of electoral participation or boycott and yet surrender to the anti-fascist reactionaries the initiative to form legal parties and field candidates. Without its own legal party, the broad people's movement allowed its mass organizations and alliances to be the recruiting ground of the anti-fascist reactionary parties.

Now, the Partido ng Bayan can build its own strength on a nationwide scale and win political victories on its own account. The party can also engage in a new form of alliance—the interparty alliance—to extend the dimensions of its strength and defend itself against the most pro-imperialist and reactionary parties.

Of course, we can also recall the time when in 1946 the movement for national freedom and popular democracy could win large electoral victories in Central Luzon but these were subsequently wiped out by the fascist repression of the U.S.—Roxas regime. Remembering this bitter experience should make us ever vigilant and should remind us that electoral struggle is not the sole or main form of struggle to achieve national freedom and popular democracy.

But it must be understood that for a moribund social system to be finally changed all forms of political organization and struggle must be employed by the people. A progressive legal party engaged in electoral struggle may not be able to radically transform an oppressive and exploitative society. But it can make important, though secondary contributions to the total effort to effect social revolution.

#### Favorable Conditions

Objective conditions in the Philippines are exceedingly favorable for the growth in strength and advance of the Partido ng Bayan and other organized forces of the people's democratic movement.

The ruling system continues to decay. Its crisis continues to deepen and worsen. There is not a single party or combination of parties of the ruling classes that can offer a solution to the ever worsening political and economic crisis. Instead, factions of the same ruling classes are engaged in a bitter and deadly struggle for supremacy.

The policies being imposed on the Philippines by the U.S. either through its direct agencies or through multilateral agencies like the IMF and World Bank are exacerbating the social crisis and intensifying social unrest. The intensified oppression and exploitation of the Filipino people by U.S. imperialism and the local reactionary classes are compelling and inciting the people to wage armed revolution.

The flagrant reign of fascist terror under the U.S.—Marcos regime has failed to quell the armed revolutionary movement but has instead inflamed it.

The overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and the ascendance of the Aquino presidency have not resulted in the solution of those fundamental problems which in the first place brought about the fascist dictatorship. The continuing non-solution of these problems spells continuing polarization and armed conflict.

The threat of fascist restoration comes not only from the Marcos faction principally but also from the Enrile faction secondarily. The Aquino government itself is pulled by two contradictory trends. There is the principal trend represented by those rabidly pro-imperialist and reactionary elements who hold key positions in the cabinet. And there is the secondary trend represented by those who describe themselves as liberal democrats and who hold secondary positions in the same cabinet.

The Aquino presidency is not yet in firm control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This military machinery is divided into three major factions: the dominant Enrile faction, the rising Aquino faction and the Marcos faction. These are maneuvering and countermaneuvering according to their respective interests.

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*The overthrow of the Marcos fascist dictatorship and the ascendance of the Aquino presidency have not resulted in the solution of those fundamental problems which in the first place brought about the fascist dictatorship.*

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The Marcos faction is strongly tempted to launch a coup before the ratification of a new constitution, especially if the Enrile faction can split the Aquino government. To create circumstances in which it can seize power for itself, the Enrile faction could also encourage a coup attempt by the Marcos faction. The two factions are using each other to promote their respective interests on the same ground of rabid pro-imperialism and anti-communism.

But a coup by either faction is being held back by certain factors. The U.S. does not yet want to restore a Marcos-type situation so soon in the face of still substantial though decreasing popular support for the Aquino government, the continuing advance of the rural armed forces of the New People's Army and the possibility of armed insurrection.

The U.S. is using a financial squeeze and the threat of a coup to pressure the Aquino presidency to make an early commitment on the retention of U.S. military bases beyond 1991; to comply with the policy dictates of direct U.S. agencies and, U.S.-controlled multilateral agencies; and to cut down the size and influence of liberal democrats in the cabinet.

While there is yet no go-signal from the U.S. for a coup and the very fractiousness of the AFP deters the Marcos and Enrile factions from initiating any coup, the Aquino government seeks to further its relative stability by compromising with the U.S., dishing out a new constitution and holding new elections.

Despite the discontent of the UNIDO over the fact that it is merely the formal ruling party and that the PDP-LABAN is the really ascendant party, the Aquino presidency is bent on maintaining the alliance of the UNIDO, PDP-LABAN and the Liberal Party. The Enrile faction is likely to bolt or be eased out of the Aquino government, find shelter in the NP [Nationalista Party], and develop a coalition of the NP, KBL [New Society Movement—Marcos' party], and the PNP.

The Partido ng Bayan must be ready for any eventuality. If there is going to be any fascist restoration, the time before it must be used to build the party on a nationwide scale and at the grass-roots level. Whatever strength is built before the restoration of fascist rule occurs would be contributory to popular resistance. If there is no restoration in the immediate future, the Partido ng Bayan must be able to conduct electoral and other forms of legal struggle.

Because it is so far the only legal party which can offer fundamental solutions to such fundamental problems as U.S. imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, the Partido ng Bayan is bound to gain ever widening mass support and to strengthen itself as no legal party has ever done before.

In view of the multiplicity of political parties in the Philippines, whatever strength the Partido ng



Bayan can gain will become decisive in the formation of an interparty alliance and in shifting the balance against the most pro-imperialist and most reactionary party or parties.

As matters stand, the parties supporting the Aquino government are still the less reactionary ones and they take a relatively democratic posture against the threat of fascist restoration. Because of the dual character of the Aquino government, the Partido ng Bayan has to adopt and carry out a policy of support and principled criticism.

The party will gain mass support and political strength by strengthening the democratic tendency of the Aquino presidency and by exposing and opposing the intensifying U.S. and local reactionary pressures on the Aquino government to violate the national and democratic interests of the people and escalate military campaigns against the people.

The party must also be ready for a realignment of forces in case the Aquino government completely

capitulates to U.S. imperialism and local reaction. The Constitutional Commission is turning out to be a big swindle. And President Aquino will soon go to the U.S. to do some further bargaining.

Considering the great advances already achieved and still to be achieved by the national democratic movement, Partido ng Bayan is bound to win great victories in electoral and other forms of legal struggle. We must anticipate that as we win more seats in elections, U.S. imperialism and the local reactionaries will exert more efforts to defeat the sovereign will of the people through violence and deception.

But whatever will be the outcome of our electoral campaigns in terms of seats gained, we shall be able to help raise the level of consciousness, organization and militance of the people to a higher one which facilitates the comprehensive victory of the people's revolution for national freedom and popular democracy. ■

## *Interview with Julio Rivera*

## **Reassessment by Philippine Communists**

**FM:** In many people's view, the Communist Party of the Philippines found itself left by the wayside with its boycott of the election last winter that brought Cory Aquino to power. Now there has been criticism from within the party. What kinds of errors does the party feel it made?

**JR:** The criticism of the line of boycotting the presidential elections in February of this year essentially centered on three basic areas: 1) the leadership at that time underestimated the capacity and willingness of the masses to go beyond electoral processes and beyond a purely anti-fascist struggle, spilling over into the willingness of the masses even to engage in insurrectionary activity. 2) The party leadership feels that they underestimated the ability and willingness of the bourgeois reformists to push the struggle against Marcos to a final confrontation. If it could be done through elections, fine; if they had to go beyond elections, they were willing to do that. 3) The party feels they overestimated the ability of the U.S. government to control and manipulate the situation in the Philippines. Also, they overestimated the staying power of the Marcos machine and underestimated the splits within the Marcos camp itself.

**FM:** What is the thinking in the party now on how it should have participated in the February elections, in Manila and in the countryside?

**JR:** "Monday morning quarterbacks" are seldom appreciated, but here goes. Some people within the party feel that the Left should have developed a more sophisticated way of countering U.S.-Marcos plans. The CPP and the NDF could have denounced the election and criticized Aquino's limited campaign platform without calling for a boycott. Legal organizations could have participated in

*Julio Rivera is a Filipino activist living in California. After a month-long return visit to the Philippines, Rivera was interviewed by Forward Motion. His comments are in reference to a major article, "Party Conducts Assessment, Says Boycott Policy Was Wrong," in the party publication, Ang Bayan.*



Aquino's campaign and introduced national democratic positions. This would not necessarily have affected the election outcome. But it would have allowed the organization to remain on the cutting edge of political developments. It would have facilitated a quicker response to election fraud.

**FM:** Does the self-criticism mean that the CPP is open to the idea that its goals can be achieved through parliamentary struggle alone?

**JR:** I don't believe that there is anybody in the party or the NDF who thinks that the party or the NDF should abandon the position that the political goals of the Filipino people cannot be achieved mainly through parliamentary struggle. Or even in a more limited sense, that the U.S.-Marcos dictatorship could have been overthrown through elections. From a strict historical sense, that position is correct, because Marcos was overthrown not through an election but through a combination of coup d'etat and an insurrection. Plus the U.S. at the last minute said: Marcos is washed up.

Neither are they saying that Aquino carried the political agenda of the Filipino people, or that the government today satisfies the aspirations of the Filipino people. They are not saying that at all. What they are saying is that if the Party had decided on a stand of critical support for Aquino, it might have accomplished a number of things.

One of them would be that they would have done a better job of frustrating the campaign of the U.S. to split off the liberal wing of the Filipino bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, and the upper petty bourgeoisie, from the Left. It would have made it easier to continue to work in these sectors of the population and would have made it more difficult for liberal democrats to unite with the Right in the Filipino ruling class.

It's clear that Aquino herself was aware of the fact that her ability to secure the support of the U.S. was dependent on her distancing herself from the Left. But, exactly a year prior to Aquino's candidacy, in December 1984, Aquino signed a statement that was not only anti-fascist, anti-Marcos, but in the Philippine context fulfilled at least the basic requirements of anti-imperialism, which is being against the U.S. military bases. It also included fairly clearcut support for land reform. The question that

the NDF is asking itself is: what happened between December 1984 and December 1985?

The experience of the boycott showed very clearly that the masses believed that something could be achieved by supporting Cory Aquino. I don't think that they necessarily believed that Aquino could win against Marcos. I think it was more a situation where they were so angry at Marcos that any thing that they could do against Marcos they felt they should go ahead and do.

In terms of the relationship between the vanguard and the masses, the criticism says that there was some distancing that occurred during the election because the direction of the political movement of the masses was indeed to support Aquino.

**FM:** The CPP statement speaks of summing up the boycott policy as well as a "general summing up...of the party's experiences in the struggle against the U.S.-Marcos fascist dictatorship. At the same time steps will be undertaken to strengthen the party's ideological foundation and raise the theoretical knowledge of the entire party." Is the reassessment going on in the party a broad rectification, much broader than the boycott tactic? If so (as seems to be the case), what are the main areas the party seeks to rectify?

**JR:** I think it is true that there is a fairly wide ranging examination of the party's *tactics* in a number of areas. There is no questioning of the basic strategy of people's war. We should not give the impression in discussing this position that the party has abandoned the strategy of people's war.

But even on the question of people's war, there are discussions, because Marxist-Leninist theory is not dogma. It's a framework, at best—a set of guidelines, that you apply to concrete situations. So there is constant discussion of the particular shape and form of people's war in the Philippine context. There is also discussion of the particulars of the description of Philippine society as semi-colonial and semi-feudal, because that only tells you certain things. It doesn't tell you the way in the which the Philippines has changed, for example, from 1965 when Marcos took power to 1986 when Marcos was kicked out. A lot of things certainly happened in that time. You still use the description, but certainly semi-colonial and semi-feudal in 1965 meant a very

different kind of society from a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society in 1986.

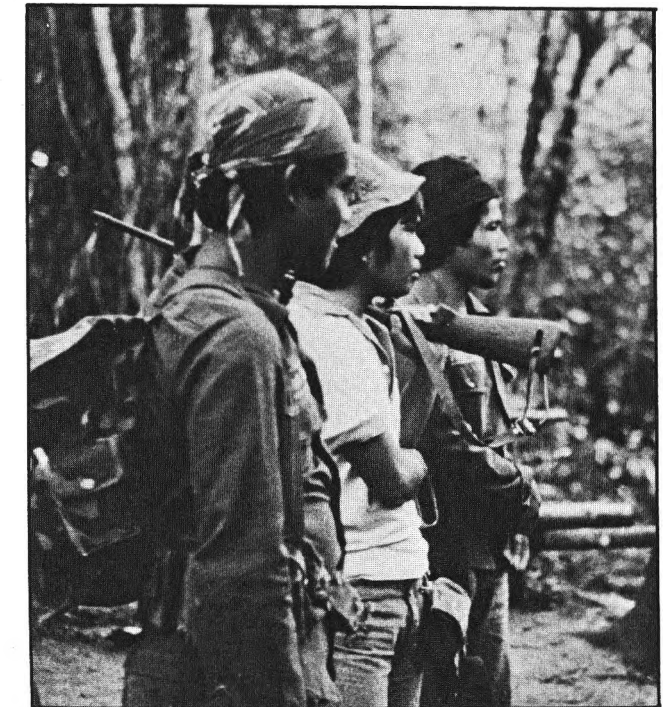
As far as people's war is concerned, a lot of thinking and discussion is being directed towards speeding up preparation of the capability of the party to lead during insurrectionary situations. And to mesh rural based guerrilla warfare with urban insurrections. We are not talking about the NDF just having discovered urban insurrection, or that they were so mesmerized by the formulation of the countryside surrounding the cities that they never organized in the cities. The NDF's urban organization is very sophisticated.

There is also a lot of discussion about the political role of Manila. We have a tendency to look at Manila as Baguio (a small Philippine city) ten times bigger. Or as a small town 100 times bigger. That's not so at all. Manila has 6 million people; it's got 75% of the electricity generation capacity of the Philippines; it has a different dynamic. We should have different tactics for dealing with the situation in Manila. What they are saying is we should shape our alliance policy and our perception of united front to bring the political dynamic of Manila much more into our thinking and our tactics.

They say, for example, if you look at what happened at the end of February (the fall of Marcos), it is basically what happened in Manila. The NDF, it is true, did not play much of a role in Manila. But in the rest of the country the NDF played a very big role. There was a problem in Manila with some distancing of the NDF from the basic movement of the masses, and there was a distancing between NDF united front cadre and liberal democrats and bourgeois reformists in Manila. That didn't happen in the rest of the country where the legal formations of the NDF continued to play a leading role.

You even had situations like the day before Marcos left, the commander of government troops in central Luzon, which is a key area, who turned out to be pro-Enrile and Ramos, called up the regional office of a well-known national democratic organization and said, "I have intelligence reports that several battalions of Marcos loyalist troops are driving from the Ilocos region (which is Marcos' stronghold) to Manila. I don't have the troops to stop them. Can you set up barricades?"

Things like that were happening. And this is reflected in developments since Aquino took over. The NDF is very strongly represented in the local governments outside Manila, much more so than it is in



NPA

E. San Juan

Manila. The fact is that the political weight of Manila is such that what happens in Manila may not determine what happens in the rest of the country, but what happens in the rest of the country may also not determine what happens in Manila. There is a lot of very careful reassessment based on these kinds of ideas that people are bringing up.

**FM:** What are the CIA and U.S. government generally doing now to thwart the Left?

**JR:** We're in a period of respite from the U.S. But that period is not very long. U.S. imperialism has not been able to take advantage of this period to consolidate the Philippine ruling class around a right-wing political agenda. And instead, what the U.S. confronts in the Philippines right now is a very badly divided ruling class. In the situation where the Left continues to grow underground, continues to grow in its armed capability, and at the same time has the democratic space for operating openly and



extending its influence, the situation for the U.S. today in one sense is more difficult than it was in the past under Marcos.

What the U.S. is trying to do is consolidate the right-wing of the Philippine ruling class (the military, the representatives of big business in the government) and the web of Marcos loyalists which is still strung out all over. And to do it in such a way that they can consolidate Aquino and all the people to the left of her in the government (it's really just center-left) around the Right. Or, at the least, prevent their consolidating around the Left. And of course Aquino is key right now.

The obstacles that the U.S. faces are 1) the economic situation continues to be terrible and it is not likely to improve significantly in the next couple of years, 2) the Left continues to be very strong. The U.S. had hoped that the boycott error and the establishment of some kind of reformist government would take the wind out of the sails of the Left. It's not happening. The U.S. is finding that—partly as a function of the strength of the Left and partly as a function of the economic situation—Aquino herself and the liberal democrats are proving not to be push-overs. They are proving that they have the smarts to resist the military and big business.

In a number of key areas they are taking positions that may in the long run still push them to the right, but for right now anyway create a lot of headaches for the U.S. They are doing it in a whole range of policy areas. They are doing it on the key issue of how to deal with the Philippine foreign debt. The sentiment for selective repudiation within the cabinet is very, very strong. They are doing it on the question of how to deal with the Left. They are insisting on negotiations at a time when the U.S. and the military are saying: "No, we can't do that. Just go out there and bash their heads." They are insisting on a thoroughgoing dismantling of the apparatus of the U.S.—Marcos dictatorship. Whether you're talking about going after hidden wealth and taking over Marcos' and Marcos' cronies' assets in the Philippines or you're talking about prosecuting human rights violators from the Philippine military in court, they're going ahead with that. And the Left is right in there with them. Helping them out, being very much a part of this whole process.

Mind you, the Right is still very strong. They control the military. They control the key economic

ministries. But they haven't been able to get away from the politically defensive position that they've been put in. They don't have an issue except for anti-communism. The momentum of the anti-Marcos movement continues, and so the military is politically on the defensive, the right wing economic ministers are on the defensive.

Aquino's economic problems are really terrible. Look at the finances: The arrangement that Marcos worked out with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) called for a budget deficit of about 12 billion pesos for the whole of 1986. Marcos was pledged to limit the deficit to 12 billion out of the total 95 billion government budget. At the end of February when Cory took over, the budget deficit was already 9 billion pesos. The government is literally bankrupt. It's not a question of getting more loans. The economy can't absorb any more loans. Marcos got \$3 billion in new loans in late 1984, and by the time Cory took over, out of that \$3 billion less than \$1 billion had been used. The economy just doesn't have the capacity to absorb those loans. What they need is outright grants, and that's why they're very dependent on the U.S. government.

The danger is that Aquino, and to a lesser extent her liberal ministers, will suffer from the standard illusions of reformists that they can make some concessions to the U.S. and gradually, through a slow process, will be able to secure enough independence from the U.S. More importantly, after a certain point, they are going to begin to justify pragmatism as nationalism.

FM: Thanks very much for your comments. ■

## LIFT EVERY VOICE

## New Steps Against Apartheid Amandla!

*by Themba Vilakazi*

In October 1986, Ronald Reagan was handed his worst foreign policy defeat prior to the Iran/Contras debacle. At that time, the Republican Senate overwhelmingly endorsed the congressional override of the President's South Africa sanctions bill veto. Though far from the preferred Dellums bill initially adopted by the House, this outcome was still a major victory for the anti-apartheid forces, and it foreshadowed an increasing exodus of US corporations doing business in South Africa.

According to the Investor Responsibility Research Center (a Washington, D.C. based research institution that tracks U.S. corporate involvement in South Africa), thirty-two American companies have sold their operations in South Africa or made announcements of their intentions to do so. Coca Cola, General Motors, IBM and Kodak are the latest to announce their withdrawal from South Africa. The latter are also among the biggest U.S. companies operating in South Africa. For this reason, the white business community in South Africa has been stung by these withdrawals.

There are various motivating factors for the spate of corporate withdrawals. In the past year, more than thirty municipalities have passed selective purchase ordinances. These ordinances limit the awarding of contracts to corporations that do business in South Africa. For example, unless a product was unavailable elsewhere, or available elsewhere at prohibitive cost, the municipality would not be allowed to buy the product from a company with operations in South Africa. Because of its South Africa operations, Fluor Corporation lost a \$2.5 million contract with the city of Los Angeles in August 1986. These local initiatives are directly attributable to the efforts of the divestment movement in the United States.

*Themba Vilakazi is a representative of the African National Congress based in Boston, Massachusetts.*

Another important factor that has had an impact on corporate decisions pertaining to their South African operations is the increasing number of pension funds selling shares in companies doing business in South Africa. According to the *New York Times* there is more than \$30 billion scheduled for divestiture. While this sum represents a very small percentage of the total value of the stocks on the New York Stock Exchange, it introduces enough uncertainty about the future to merit consideration by corporate managers. Again, the politics of divestment are transformed into economic factors tangible to those who might otherwise be quick to dismiss politics from the business of making money.

The gains of the divestment movement are undeniable. However the announcements of corporate withdrawals from South Africa should not be mistaken for the ultimate goal of disengaging foreign capital and technology from apartheid South Africa. While Kodak intends to make a clean break with apartheid, GM and IBM intend to remove only their logos from apartheid South Africa.

South Africa has been in an economic recession for more than two years now. Eighteen months ago, top U.S. lenders refused to extend South Africa's debt payments. Though a repayment compromise was worked out, the South African economy is still in a slump. GM's market share has been on the decline, and the company has been losing money in South Africa. To halt this decline GM might very well have done in South Africa what it has decided to do in America—that is, conduct a callous and massive lay-off of workers. This, however, was not a choice easily applicable in South Africa for GM. After all, the core of the argument for GM's continued presence in South Africa was that it provided employment for Black workers who, we were told, would otherwise starve to death.

For GM the applicable alternative was to sell the company to local management that would be in a better position to conduct the massive lay-offs. The sale of GM products in South Africa would continue under South African ownership. GM would continue to support apartheid South Africa, hopefully reduce the criticism at home now that they could claim to be out of South Africa, and make its South African operations profitable again. In fact, GM products might even directly support the South African military in contravention of American law. Should the South



South African auto workers during the three week strike at the GM plant in Port Elizabeth. Workers demanded severance pay and board representation from the local company buying the plant from General Motors. UPI

African managers be discovered in what would be, for them, a financially profitable and ideologically compatible exercise, GM America might plausibly be able to claim denial of the process.

In light of the new corporate strategy to continue operations in South Africa, the anti-apartheid movement needs to adjust its attack. The divestment bills that have been passed on the national, state and municipal levels need to be amended where necessary to target not only the companies that have a physical presence in South Africa, but also those that have license or franchise agreements for operations in South Africa. The goal is to assist in the destruction of the apartheid regime by denying it financial and technological transfers from abroad. Only then can the oppressed in South Africa have a chance to be masters of their own destiny.

**Amandla! ■**

## Samora Machel

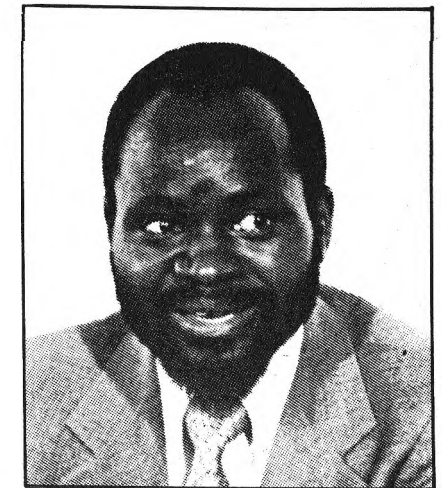
*A stunning loss for Africa and for all freedom-loving people throughout the world.* Machel, robbed of his life at 53 years of age was a major figure in the struggle for the liberation of Mozambique and all of southern Africa.

Machel's plane crashed just inside the South African border on October 19 under mysterious circumstances. Official South African reports claim the tragedy resulted from bad weather. But there is increasing suspicion that South Africa played a part in causing Machel's untimely death.

Samora Machel was born into a peasant family. As a young man he became a nurse. When FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) was formed in 1962, Machel joined up with the people's army. In 1966, he became the Commander of the guerilla forces, and in 1968 was elected to FRELIMO's Central Committee.

Machel led the Mozambican people and FRELIMO through a long and difficult struggle which bore fruit on June 25, 1975, when the people of Mozambique declared their independence from Portuguese colonialism. Mozambique under Samora Machel continued the struggle for freedom for southern Africa and sustained great sacrifices. The new nation provided base areas for Zimbabwean freedom fighters in their struggle against the white minority regime of Ian Smith in what was called Rhodesia until independence was achieved there in 1980.

Machel also struggled to lift Mozambique from under a great weight of economic difficulty and poverty. Centuries of European exploitation and decades of struggle for national liberation had taken their toll. Under pressure to find a little breathing space so that the people of Mozambique could build a healthier and wealthier homeland, Machel signed the controversial "Nkomati" agreement with South Africa in 1984. Under a storm of criticism from



Der Spiegel

many in the anti-apartheid struggle, the Nkomati accords provided for South Africa's ending of military and financial aid to the MNR Mozambican counter-revolutionaries in exchange for Mozambique ending its policy of allowing ANC guerillas to operate from its territory. The treaty, however, was doomed to failure as Pretoria apparently never had any intention of honoring it. Evidence has mounted that South Africa has engaged in a destabilization campaign against Mozambique, and even an effort to topple its government. In the final weeks before Machel's plane went down, speculation had been intensifying that South Africa was planning a major move against Mozambique.

In these circumstances, the observation of the *Zimbabwe Herald's* editorial rings true: "The most likely cause of the crash remains a direct South African attack, but even in the unlikely event of Pretoria having no hand in the tragedy, President Machel is a casualty of Apartheid as surely as if his plane had been hit by South African missiles, shells or bullets."

Anti-apartheid activists in the west, and indeed all justice-loving people, must double their efforts at cutting off all support for apartheid and rally to Mozambique's side against the South African regime's desperate acts.

—Seamus Flaherty





## To Winnie:

by j.e.m.

To learn  
to read  
to weep  
to cry  
to grow, and grow,  
and reach, and struggle.

To experience,  
and live, and  
love, and hate.

For all people,  
for all times,  
for always,  
and never,  
and ever, ever after.

The struggle continues,  
La lutte continua.

We feel  
we think  
we care  
we cry  
we live  
we die  
together  
together  
In struggle  
we reach  
on  
forward  
forever.

And ever,  
And ever.  
No end.

Until all  
people are free.  
Forever.

## CHANGING CONDITIONS

### "Just Say No!"

by Dennis O'Neil and Lee Ornati

This is the first edition of "Changing Conditions," which is planned as a new regular feature in *FM*. In every issue, the column will look at two or three developments which have hit the news (or, perhaps, missed it) during the months preceding publication. And, boy, we couldn't have asked for a better time to start it up. For ten months or so, 1986 seemed roughly on a par with the rest of the decade—Reagan rotten, with the occasional bright spot, notably the victory of the Filipino people last winter. But the end of November brought the beginnings of the Iran-Contra Connection scandal and for the first time in too long, day after day the morning newspaper brought a little surge of delight to the hearts of lefties everywhere.

There was even an appetizer, the delicious Ivan Boesky/insider trading scandal, itself far from over as of this writing. Before our very eyes, the curtain parted and we got to see far deeper than usual into the workings of the dark forces which dominate our lives. When the shit hit the fan, it coated the "invisible hand" and made it visible. The "forces of the market" hailed by Reaganites and yuppies as the salvation of the American economy proved just as vicious as you'd expect, and even less efficient.

The stage for the scandal is the current period of difficult transition for the economy. Since their traditional lines of business are proving iffy propositions, capitalists and top corporate management have displayed an inclination to manage finances. This is understandable given the mediocre job they've done managing production and service delivery. And the Reagan era world-view has only encouraged them. If the Market is All, what really matters is the buying and selling, not whatever is bought and sold. Huge leaps in telecommunications and information processing technology have fueled the boom in which the stock market went

from 1,000 to 2,000 in six years after taking a century to first hit the thousand mark. Now it was some insider in the fraternity who dropped the dime on Boesky to the S.E.C. in the first place. One big factor in his fall was the resentment of the old line, blue-blood WASP establishment, the Biddles and Dukes and the like, who resent the go-go interlopers and their junk bonds and quick killings and lack of class. Boesky epitomized this—a con-man, a Jew, a Hunky, a philistine who married rich. “Dear lord, the man was an off-Broadway actor ten years ago.” Insider tips are the life-blood of the stock market, but they’re passed over dinner at the Princeton Club or in the executive steam room after a rousing round of squash, nothing so crass as kickbacks of a flat percentage of the take on some arbitrage coup. But the new game and its new rules had involved more than a few *arrivistes*. Boesky, for instance, worked hand-in-glove with Drexel Burnham, a firm having the names of two families in Philadelphia’s main line whose blood is so blue, it’s ultraviolet. Even if the present storm grows more severe, the survivors will include more of the capital-rich old boys than the wheeler-dealer newcomers.



Not that Boesky’s getting beaten up. Having stolen a fortune, he’s been fined \$100 million so far, which he can handle out of petty cash. And his chance of doing hard time behind bars is minute compared with that of the oft-cited hypothetical laid-off steelworker who sticks up a gas station to buy food for his family. The larger irony is that Boesky got almost a week to liquidate his holdings and play the market before his bust was announced. Talk about insider information! Lenin once remarked

that the capitalists would sell the rope they’re to be hanged with. The present scandal shows that at such an event there’ll be some sharpie like Boesky out there speculating in rope futures.

A word should be directed to the arguments of the *Wall Street Journal* and others that corporate raids, arbitrage and so on are the mechanisms by which inefficient corporations are restructured and unprofitable capital redeployed. Well, burning down a forest can clear out dead wood, but that’s not all it does. Poor management and a lack of shareholder confidence can invite raids. So do such signs of health, in capitalist terms, as profitable divisions which can be sold for a quick profit, large holdings of land or natural resources, pension funds with “too much” money in them and so forth. A successful raid can owe as much to timing or the rapacity of the legal gladiators employed by the raiders as to business “fundamentals.”

Nor are the results much of a tribute to the market’s invisible hand. Captured or ransomed, takeover targets usually wind up saddled by enormous debt burdens which leech capital needed for such mundane functions as research, production and marketing. The defense of Goodyear Rubber management against Sir James Goldsmith’s raid shows who really pays the costs. Several of the company’s insufficiently profitable plants were closed. Thousands of workers have been indefinitely laid off. The bosses, naturally, are already nattering about the concessions that they’ll need in the next contract.

The ideological problems raised by the insider trading scandal even have a strange little reflection within the capitalist community. Various theoreticians and spoketypes have proclaimed the need for an extensive “moral reexamination” by American business and for a lot of business school ethics courses. This is a declaration of war by old capitalists on yuppie aspirants to the bourgeois ranks and their nakedly Social Darwinist moral code, the survival of the greediest. It’s a bit late in the game to try and inculcate the yups with the traditional noblesse oblige expected of finance capitalists. Maybe we’ll be treated in the next few years to an unhinged and rudderless, consumption-oriented, me-generation section of capital flailing around in search of new values. The prospect is appalling, to be sure, but could also turn out pretty funny.

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As *FM* goes to press in mid-December, it’s obvious that the Iran/Contra Scandal is still in its early stages, and impossible to summarize in any real sense. Already, though, we see that the ruling elite in this country faces the total collapse of what they thought was a developing foreign policy consensus. There hadn’t been one since the Vietnam War. Carter’s early “human rights” rhetoric and orientation toward the Third World and detente were rejected. The initial Reagan Administration approach was also worrisome—“Evil Empire” rhetoric and a more quietly expressed “strategic” outlook of “rolling back” the Soviets, first and foremost in Nicaragua. The exposure of the CIA’s secret war against Nicaragua sharpened differences and resulted in the Boland Amendment. This banned aid to the contras, thus setting the stage for the present debacle.

In the meantime, however, the Administration began to cobble together a new foreign policy approach under the watchword of democracy. This increasingly lined up the bulk of the ruling class, the media and the liberal intelligentsia behind it. This new consensus had its most dramatic successes in the timely ousters of Marcos and Baby Doc, precisely the type of scumbuckets you’d assume Reagan would stick with to the bitter end. More important was the El Salvador experience where the “democratic”—elections—plus—helicopter—gunships formula proved to have it all over nun-raping death squads as a method of advancing U.S. interests. And “democratic” concerns provided a useful cover for unrelenting hostility to Nicaragua. The extent to which forces in the ruling class were falling into line was clearest in the unanimity evoked by the bombing of Libya last spring. Democratic politicians hailed it. So did the pundits of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Even more than Grenada (which, among other things, lacked a “villain” of Khaddafiesque stature), it marked Reagan’s foreign policy high-water mark. Even contra-aid was restored.

Things stalled some with Reagan’s maverick performance at and after his semi-summit with Gorbachev, where he careened well outside the existing bourgeois consensus on nuclear arms and freaked out the European ruling establishments with whom he had developed strong ties. Only his peculiar and monomaniacal vision of Star Wars kept him from giving the farm away, in their view.



The Iran/Contra scandal turned the post-Reykjavik pause into a panic. The active ingredient of the new Reagan foreign policy turned out to be not democracy, but untrammelled interventionism. The U.S. was intervening daily, hourly, and on a global scale. And interventionism isn’t a strategy. In today’s world, treating it like one is a recipe for disaster. This isn’t the ’50s; the U.S. no longer has the freedom to poke around at will. The whole mess shows these limits graphically: even the non-strategic goal of freeing half a dozen hostages was too much to ask. As the crisis deepens, U.S. imperialism’s losses continue to mount. So far the big winner (unless you count the New Czars who rule the Soviet Union, currently sitting back and perhaps contemplating the possibility that Santa Claus may exist after all) is Iran. Its rulers have once again made a laughing-stock of the Great Satan; Saudi Arabia and other pro-U.S. Arab states are quietly rebuilding bridges; and, with the U.S.—proclaimed boycott reduced to a sick joke, every arms dealer in the world is in Teheran flogging the hardware Iran needs to pursue its war with Iraq. The coordinated Western anti-terrorist campaign aimed at Assad has been disrupted and the pro-U.S. rulers of rivals Jordan and Egypt are reeling.

And in the U.S., even after the paralysis and the infighting fade, the ruling class will be back to the drawing board in assembling a foreign policy that can unite the bulk of its ranks. The failure of the Reagan administration to stabilize and institutionalize the rough foreign policy consensus it shaped only underlines the fact that the U.S. ruling class remains in a state of dealignment.





As yet conditions do not exist, especially in the economic base, for a new ruling alignment and consensus to develop. This was also evident in the results of the mid-term elections in November. Walter Dean Burnham recently pointed out some facts that tended to be lost in the mainstream media's "Democrats Capture Senate! More Republican Governors!" coverage. First, no one has "realigned" the American people. Popular participation approached all-time lows. Over 100 million Americans who could have voted didn't bother. Second, the results showed no evidence of major shifts in long-term party strength. In races for 435 House seats, a total of six incumbents lost. Six. Structurally, there hasn't been a House race this uncompetitive since 1832.

To editorialize: An interesting and encouraging set of conditions for a Jesse Jackson Presidential candidacy is taking shape. Boesky type scandals erode the hold of the Reaganite let-the-market-solve-the-nation's-problems ideology. Foreign policy is a shambles of hypocrisy and incompetence. The Reagan attempt to create a new ruling consensus and alignment of forces has been dealt a mortal wound. The terms of the next election have been broken open. The question is no longer, who can fill Reagan's shoes? Both Republicans and Democrats are shifting gears to try and find a way to appeal to increasingly alienated voters.

We're not predicting an exciting or historically transitional election, just a wide open and interesting one in which the things Jackson has to offer will be at a premium. He has a powerful vision for America which doesn't accord pride of place to capital and to the high and mighty. He has a decent record of consistency which has been borne out by recent events, while rival candidates switch stances at the drop of a hat into the ring. On a more specific level, his approach to freeing hostages stands up pretty well by comparison with the National Security Council. Remember, the big noise about his successful negotiating trip to the Mideast had to do with whether or not Syria paid for his airline ticket. On the whole, that seems fairly cheap compared with the damage done by tens of millions sloshing around in Swiss and Panamanian banks.

On to '88. ■

## Report and Commentary

### 1986 Labor Notes Conference

Responding to a call for "New Directions for Labor," over 900 people attended the largest Labor Notes gathering since the first one held in 1980. Representatives from a resurgent unionism in El Salvador, the Philippines, Mexico, Brazil and South Africa made up the Friday evening panel and were the focus of the first workshop session, on labor internationalism. On the anti-concessions front, a sizable contingent of strikers from Hormel along with trusted officers from P-9, and leaders of the Austin support group and Corporate Campaign provided the focus for a panel and workshop session on Sunday.

Saturday's sessions focused on other issues and problems confronting labor activists. Exploring "What's New, What Works," a panel of speakers included Baldemar Velazquez, President of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), Ray Rogers of Corporate Campaign, Inc., Leslie Lommansson, District 65/UAW organizer at Boston University, and Joe Smith, a local UAW president who described how they "ran the plant backwards" at Moog automotive and won a satisfactory agreement without a strike. An array of workshops, from "Building Rank-and-File Locals" to "Combatting Racism" to "Workers' Theatre," sixteen in all, gave this writer the feeling of being at a great bazaar, a marketplace of labor activism with "something for everyone."

#### New Unionism in the Third World

The two main topics for this conference, internationalism and the lessons of P-9, reflect important themes of labor activism in the past year. The debate on organized labor's foreign policy has filtered up to the AFL-CIO Executive Council itself. The support for Hormel amounted to a rebellion on the local level against the strike-breaking activities of Wynn, Kirkland, et al.

As organized labor has retreated into itself in the U.S., workers in South Africa and the Philippines in particular have taken the lead in the struggle for freedom and democracy within their respective societies and have been subjected to bloody reprisals. The conference was dedicated to Rolando Olalia, the leader of the Kilsung Mayo Union (KMU) who was assassinated by right-wing militarists a day before the conference opened.

Crispin Beltran, former General Secretary of the KMU was scheduled to speak at the conference but was denied a visa by the State Department. During the workshop the following morning we learned that Beltran and a number of other leaders were the targets of an unsuccessful assassination attempt by the military.

Amon Msane, chief shop steward of the 3M plant near Johannesburg that walked out in solidarity with workers at the Freehold, NJ, 3M plant here in the United States, received a standing ovation. The workshops which followed focused on developing solidarity and anti-intervention work, the AFL-CIO's foreign policy and protectionism.

The presence of African, Asian and Latin American working class leaders on the podium, however, was in contrast to the familiar overwhelming whiteness of the audience. Overcoming this disability will require reaching out to centers of Black, Asian and Hispanic activists, listening, learning and then changing the agenda. New panel topics might include the self-organization of Black workers in the South both within and outside the organized union framework, the continuing struggle to increase minority and female representation in the building trades, affirmative action, labor and the Rainbow, and issues related to undocumented workers. Positive steps were taken with the participation of the Black Workers for Justice at the workshop level. In future gatherings, the

perspectives of similar groups should be put before the entire conference in a panel presentation.

### Lessons of P-9

Labor Notes staffer and panelist Kim Moody drew two main conclusions from the P-9 struggle: first, don't sign a pact with the devil of competition. Second, the local was democratic but the international undemocratic, and a contributing factor to the latter were the mergers. Moody called for a new accounting of power based on "our human material and self-organization" and chastised naysayers for suggesting that the Hormel workers have lost their struggle. "It's not over till the payback," he said. "The leadership is intact, the fight for 800 jobs continues, the defense of the eighteen indicted workers is underway."

One of the most tangible effects of this Labor Notes conference could be a revived support network. But raising up as a slogan, "learn to follow the example of P-9," presents some problems. P-9 was a rank-and-file local with democratic, militant leadership in a profitable, state-of-the-art plant. While we can all work to build democratic locals and an activist membership and draw inspiration from the P-9 example in fighting concessions, the fact remains that the rug is being pulled out from under us with plant closings, lay-offs, disinvestment, and automation. There are fewer and fewer "strongholds of proletarian power" from which to launch such struggles, and the small number of industrial workers at this conference (compared to previous ones) bears this out.

For example, at prior conferences, the UAW caucus used to be a meeting mainly of active rank-and-file auto workers who took the opportunity to discuss, among other things, the program and tactics of the next contract struggle. This time the UAW caucus was attended mainly by staffers, lawyers, non-auto worker members, laid-off auto workers, and a relative handful of employed workers. People had lots of good ideas, but were not in a strong position to directly struggle with the Big Three. A similar situation prevails in steel, mining, machine tools, etc.

There is, however, another lesson of P-9, one which many of the workers and Austin supporters have learned and which, at least for the time being,

has changed their outlook on life. "This is a class struggle we're in," a number of Hormel workers told me as I nodded in agreement. One leader of the Austin support group described the introduction of the National Guard to protect the scabs as a turning point in her life. Being on the receiving end of the Guard for the first time gave her "a little piece of understanding of what it is like to be Black in this country." She recalled with regret struggles in the past that she had not supported and vowed to be there for others in the future.

### What's New; What Works

Learning how to wage the class struggle without a political party, with a working class divided along racial and sexual lines, with a shrinking industrial workforce and union membership, and at a time when the right wing is vying for political and cultural hegemony on the national level is no small task. One place to challenge the corporate and right wing agenda for the nation is in the electoral arena. With this in mind, a hundred or so people crowded into a workshop on the Rainbow and Labor. For labor, the Rainbow is a place where its agenda can be developed and propagated in conjunction with other social movements, most notably the movement for Black political power. It is a challenge to labor officialdom's own alliance with cold war liberalism at home and abroad. And it is a way to strike a blow for union democracy. For as we demand a hearing for the Rainbow within labor we challenge the vest pocket endorsement process that leaves the membership without a voice or vote, as passive onlookers in the political arena.

While listening to Victor Reuther, the conference keynote speaker, I couldn't help thinking that it might have been more appropriate to ask Jesse Jackson to address this conference. It struck me that Jackson stands out as the only nationally prominent candidate to show his solidarity with the internationalist and anti-concessions themes to which the conference dedicated itself. Still, from the infectious class consciousness of the P-9'ers to the spirited Rainbow/labor workshop to the strong internationalism, there are good signs and good stirrings on the labor movement's left-wing and much good work for networks like Labor Notes to attend to in the coming years.—*Sean Ahern*

## The Swamp

*by Dave Cline*

Almost 20 years ago, I was dumped in a strange swamp and told to find my own way out.

I started walking, but with every step I seemed to sink in deeper and deeper.

But I kept on walking, what choice did I have?

If I had stopped, I would have sunk in over my head.

Finally I did make it out and thought  
"Thank God, it's over."

But I was to learn, it was only the beginning.

Every time I looked back, I could see my footprints.

I wished I hadn't entered in the first place but that didn't make my footprints go away.

My shoes were caked with mud and it wouldn't wash off.

So I tried to forget the shoes, the footprints, the swamp but my numb mind led me right back in.

Yeah, I may be slow, but I learn.

Today I know the footprints will remain,  
they're mine for the duration.

My shoes aren't new anymore  
but they still have alot of miles left on them.

So I've taken up my post,  
a sentry at the entrance to the swamp.

There I can help those still stuck inside.

And warn others who approach of the dangers that lay ahead.

STOP THE WAR IN CENTRAL AMERICA!  
NO MORE VIETNAMS!

*dedicated to the Veterans Fast For Life  
and the Jersey City Vet Center*





# CIA off campus

Max Harvey

On October 28th, following a spirited picket line and rally attended by well over one hundred students, an attempt was made to enter Fraser Hall on the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis campus where CIA recruitment was taking place. University police, acting on orders from the college administration, sealed off the building, and a small contingent of cops were placed in front of the main doors. When the rally came to a close, a call was put out over the sound system for people to take action; the cops were pushed aside and a large group of students began pulling on the doors. As the doors were being forced open, the police opted to use mace and clubs on the demonstrators.

Instead of intimidating people, this police response added fuel to the fire. The spontaneous reaction that developed was intense. Banner poles were used to shatter the door windows and rocks were used to remove the glass that remained. Activists who tried to enter a side door were clubbed to the ground. To keep people from getting into the building, the police found it necessary to use can after can of mace. About an hour after the action was in full swing, a large group of city police arrived equipped with riot gear, dogs, and—according to several reports—tear gas charges. The students continued a tenacious resistance.

A crowd of more than a thousand students gathered in front of Fraser Hall, blocking the street which runs in front of the building. Also present was a group of about twenty counter-demonstrators who chanted "Another Kent State" and called on the police to "use your guns." Anti-CIA protesters responded "use your brains, use your brains."

One of the most striking features of the day's events was the suddenness with which the character of the demonstration changed. The trashing of the doors to Fraser Hall had not been

foreseen, or planned for, by the organizers of the rally. While some pacifist forces in the Minneapolis area peace movement have argued that an attempt should have been made to "cool things out," it now seems this would have been a mistake. The political controversy that emerged following the action proved to be useful for the campus left, and provided us with a vehicle to further attack the CIA and its role in Central America. One of the main organizations involved in pulling the demonstration together—the Progressive Student Organization (PSO)—underwent a spurt of growth as a result of the demonstration. And a political climate was created in which it will be far more difficult for the CIA to openly recruit on the University of Minnesota campus in the future.

While it is wrong to assess the success of a political action solely on the media coverage it gets, the fact that this demonstration was widely covered nationally and internationally was very positive. It wasn't so long ago that the media was pushing the myth that every student on campus was a reactionary, ready to line up behind Ronald Reagan for the next war. This one-sided view has been hit hard by the movement for divestment from South Africa on many campuses. Actions like the one taken on the 28th can only help to strengthen the pole of resistance that is now developing.

## October 29th

The day after the clash at Fraser Hall, a second demonstration took place, this time under more difficult conditions. Until the evening of the 28th, organizers didn't know that the CIA was going to be recruiting the next day in another building. Consequently the political and organizational work for "Day Two" was not that thorough. The hard-hitting nature of the action on the 28th was what made it possible to pull off a credible demo with only fifteen hours notice. At the same time, there was a tendency to underestimate the reaction of the right-wing and the intensity of the contradictions that had developed between the progressive forces and the right.

Shortly before the action on the 29th began, a leading member of PSO was picked up on a felony charge for his alleged role in the previous day's activities. In a similar vein, the administration sent threatening letters to leading people in PSO and the

Central America Working Group (CAWG) that morning. In addition, press reports indicated that police planned on identifying and charging demonstrators for the 28th. This legal assault meant that caution and prudence would be necessary. It also contributed to a state-of-seige mentality among demonstrators on the 29th which hindered coming up with a positive program of action for the day.

The events of the 29th unfolded like this. A picket line of about sixty people was set up. As the picket line grew, so did the number of reactionaries as well as others coming just to check out what was happening. The geography of the situation—a courtyard-type enclosure—with hundreds of observers, demonstrators, cops, counter-demonstrators, all of whom were compressed in a very small area, meant it was very difficult to maneuver. While the right-wingers never outnumbered the anti-CIA protesters, the sporadic fighting they initiated tended to pull the focus of the event away from the CIA. The absence of any mechanism that would allow for on-the-spot planning (such as a system of marshalls), made it difficult for progressives to gain the center of the political stage. Despite these shortcomings, however, the vast majority of the participants in the second day's activities felt it was a success.

## Building the Anti-CIA Campaign

The demonstrations on the 28th and 29th were the culmination of a month-long campaign waged by PSO and CAWG against CIA recruitment. Politically this campaign had two goals. First, to educate and mobilize students against the war that the U.S. is waging on the people of Central America. And second, to politically and physically prevent the CIA from recruiting on campus. In the day-to-day work, the main emphasis was on exposing the U.S./CIA role in Central America because organizers felt that a successful demonstration depended upon the crystallization of anti-intervention sentiment on campus.

Mao once made the point that when leftists face a difficult situation, it is possible to create new and more favorable political conditions through the process of struggle. The anti-CIA campaign is a good example of this. When school began in early October, CIA recruitment was not an issue on the

*This article, by a student activist from Minneapolis, gives an analysis of the Minnesota anti-CIA work and some of the lessons that can be drawn from it, as well as some comments on changing conditions on many college campuses.*



minds of the vast majority of students. To change this situation, in the three weeks before the recruiter arrived a series of agitational events were carried out. During the second week of classes, students arrived on campus to find more than twenty effigies hung from trees on the main campus mall, each bearing a sign around the neck reading, for example, "El Salvadorian peasant killed by the CIA." The day before recruitment began, a cemetery with several hundred crosses, each carrying the name of a Nicaraguan killed by the CIA-backed contras, was erected in front of the Student Union.

In conjunction with the agitational events, a great deal of strictly educational work was done. For example, a debate was organized between a former

CIA analyst who is now speaking out against the role of the Agency in Central America and a local reactionary that drew more than two hundred and fifty people. In addition, thousands of leaflets were handed out which described in great detail the role of the CIA.

### Aftermath

The politically charged situation that existed following the two demonstrations meant that students activists had to wage a struggle for the minds and hearts of the public. But to do this successfully, it was first necessary to consolidate the progressive forces around the point that the action



Students protesting the presence of CIA recruiters at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Other anti-CIA actions have taken place at the University of Colorado-Boulder and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

was a good thing. And then it was essential to go out among the student body in a big way with this rap. Through a process of mass meetings, debates inside the PSO and CAWG, and discussion with individuals this was what actually happened. While many people retained questions about particular aspects of the demonstrations, through this discussion a consensus was reached that we needed to go out broadly and explain what was wrong with the CIA and why it shouldn't be allowed on campus. Despite threats and retribution from the school administration, the anti-CIA forces took a bold, offensive stance instead of going on the defensive.

Because of the high degree of controversy that had been generated, we did have some advantages. For example, PSO and CAWG members were sought out by the local media and there were opportunities to speak on radio and TV talk shows. A special leaflet was prepared which bluntly put a question to people: what is more important: some relatively minor property damage or the massive loss of life which is taking place in Central America? The local Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) organized a debate between representatives of the anti-CIA protesters and the College Republicans that drew more than three hundred people. PSO and CAWG organized a march through campus which targeted institutions connected with the military or the CIA (Placements Offices, ROTC, etc.) To wrap up this march, CIA recruitment literature was burned out in front of the Student Union.

### Looking to the Future

One consequence of the October demonstrations is that the authorities have launched a fairly heavy legal attack on the PSO and its members. Three activists face felony charges—aggravated criminal destruction of property—which carries with it a maximum penalty of five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine. The University has brought a series of disciplinary charges against about ten students. Five of the charges stem from a sit-in that took place a year—and-a-half ago. The only reason that these charges are being brought now is because of the CIA action. Also, the University is making an attempt to take away the student status of the Progressive Student Organization.

Of course, nobody welcomes these legal attacks and it will take a great deal of time and effort to fight them. But people also realize that these attacks are happening because the PSO has emerged as a substantial political force on the campus. The attempt to kick the PSO off campus will probably cause more people to join the organization. But one pitfall that should be avoided is devoting all of the organization's energies to resisting these attacks while failing to develop a positive program to continue the struggle.

The events at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis are part of a broader trend that has been developing on a number of campuses. While South Africa and divestment remains at the center of the present-day student movement, on campuses where divestment victories have been won, activists are turning their fire on U.S. intervention in Central America, and especially the CIA. The Minnesota actions proved the first shot in a fall bombardment. On November 11th, students at the University of Colorado-Boulder tore down a fence that the administration had erected around a building where CIA recruitment was taking place. One hundred and twenty-five riot police were called in and fifteen students were arrested. That same week, a series of anti-CIA battles began at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst which has resulted in more than seventy arrests and is still going on as this article is being written.

The CIA has plenty of problems these days as the Iran/Contra connections gets dragged into the light of day. But one thing is certain. No one in Langley is looking forward to the start of the spring recruiting season on America's campuses.

—December 1986



## Successful Left Unity

We are happy to announce that in December 1986, after prolonged and intensive discussions, the Organization for Revolutionary Unity joined the Freedom Road Socialist Organization. The ORU formed around four years ago on the West Coast. Working mainly in the Bay Area, its members have been active in the labor movement and in Central America solidarity work. They also published several pamphlets on topics ranging from the international situation to the role of working women in class struggle.

This unification has some significance beyond what it represents for the members of these two groups. Both FRSO and the ORU trace their histories back to the early 1970s and the "new communist movement." Since the beginning of this decade, however, many of the organizations comprising that movement have dissolved, generally as a result of internal struggles which they could not survive. The FRSO and the ORU can count themselves among the survivors of that period.

Unification has additional significance. The ORU was founded in opposition to the "Three Worlds thesis," the analysis first promulgated by the Communist Party of China in 1977. That thesis divided the world into three general categories according to the relations of countries to the struggle against the U.S. and Soviet superpowers. The ORU, while opposing both superpowers, believed that the Three Worlds thesis encouraged collaboration with the U.S. and other advanced Western capitalist states. FRSO, which was founded in 1985 with the unification of the Proletarian Unity League and the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters, holds to the basic analytical framework represented by the Three Worlds thesis. Believing that this framework is a basically correct and useful way of analyzing united front forces—friends and enemies—on a global scale, the FRSO

also upholds that framework's emphasis on struggles for national liberation and national independence.

Despite these general differences, the ORU and FRSO were able to reach substantial agreement when analyzing specific world events and appropriate tactical responses. Realizing this was an important indicator of basic unity between us gave us confidence in working for greater unity within a single organization. Differences remain, but in our work together over the last two years we have built significant unity around our tasks both in the peoples' movements and in building revolutionary Marxist organization. We have come to agreement on the central role played by white-supremacist national oppression and the national liberation struggles against it in this country. And we have reached new unity around our more immediate work for a mass progressive politics with the Black struggle for parity at its core.

The unification of the ORU and FRSO should also be seen in the context of other similar efforts such as the recent unification of the International Socialists, Workers Power and Socialist Unity to form Solidarity. These successful unity struggles, as well as the work of groups like the League of Revolutionary Struggle and a number of local collectives, all represent efforts to reverse the dissolution and defeatism within the revolutionary Left. While we don't intend to exaggerate the significance of any of our groups, all our efforts can play an important role in rebuilding a national revolutionary Left with an independent socialist vision for the United States.

The FRSO, now joined by the comrades of the ORU, looks forward to working closely with others on the Left. We look forward to building the closest possible ideological, political and organizational unity to help make the revolutionary Left a vital force on the national political scene.

—December 1986

## LOCOMOTION

### The Def Beat Part 2

by Dennis O'Neil

Welcome to "The Def Beat," Part 2, home of the argument that rap and heavy metal have more in common than meets the eye. Part 1 [in *FM*, August–September 1986] focussed on rap, as teenage music, as a reflection of the culture of the Black ghetto and as a radical rupture with previously dominant forms of Black popular music and other rock and roll. This time LocoMotion gives a sketchy overview of heavy metal, then goes into the "compare and contrast" part of the show.

As promised in the last column, the History of Heavy Metal Rock & Roll (Short Course) can be capsulized in two words—Led Zeppelin. Remember, say, "Whole Lotta Love" off the Led Zeppelin II album? The basic ingredients of metal are all there. There was a big bottom—both bass and drums mixed up real loud, pounding out a nice simple 4/4 beat. You had pretty Robert Plant screaming out vocals in a fashion which suggested just how uncomfortable it can be wearing pants that tight. And at the heart of the show was Jimmy Page's virtuoso guitar work: not clean, running lead lines but powerful distortion-filled chords.

#### Heavy Metal for Beginners

Put those pieces together, you've got the pattern of heavy metal ever since: basic rock and roll played enormously LOUD, lurching at the listener like a wall of slo-mo lava. Now somebody's sure to holler that this isn't really historically accurate. Okay, sure, by all means let's tip the hat to Ur-metal—early Kinks, "Inna-Gadda-Da-Vida", Jimi Hendrix, Blue Cheer, whatever. Let's acknowledge the seminal contributions of such early '70s metallurgists as Black Sabbath, who slowed things down to a ponderous, sludgy pace and embellished Led Zep's me-



David Lee Roth



dieval/mystical conceits with doomy lyrics about war, death, satan and the like. Still and all, Zep rules. Why do you think one of the biggest metal acts in the world a couple years back even called themselves Def Leppard?

The biggest problem this raises is one of boundaries. The lines of demarcation between heavy metal and the rest of rock and roll are not all that clear. For reasons I personally find too depressing to contemplate, Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven," a fifteen-year-old ditty about a bunch of hobbits or something still gets voted the number one rock song of all time with revolting regularity in radio station contests (except for oldies stations, where "In the Still of the Night" invariably wins in a walk, demonstrating that sometimes you can't win for losing). Today, probably most of the people who vote for "Stairway" and cherish their old Zep records would be horrified to be considered heavy metal freaks.

### A Conservative Subculture

It was only in the mid to late '70s that metal got codified and developed a distinct self-conscious community around it. This large subculture has its own heros, styles (long hair on guys), values ('ludes and other central nervous system depressants) and so on. There are a lot of different sub-schools of metal—glamour boy types like Ratt who have the biggest female following, guitar heroes like Yngwie Malmsteen, "Gothic" rockers like Saxon, art-metal types like Rush and numerous other permutations.

And metal blurs right into mainstream rock and roll at its edges. Heavy metal-oriented rock magazines carry features on run-of-the-mill hard rockers like Joan Jett, while purists felt deeply betrayed when Van Halen added synthesizer sweetening to make a radio, video and dance-floor hit of "Jump".

"That shit isn't metal, it's just ordinary rock. No, I take that back, it's fucking disco," snarled my friend Eddie, a metal die-hard. While the edges may be fuzzy, the core is clear. The two things *serious* metal freaks are most suspicious of are popularity, which strongly suggests a band is betraying the cause, and melody, the extensive use of which pretty much proves it. There's a point to this attitude. Until they develop huge followings, metal bands get treated like lepers by the radio stations and record

companies. As with rap, metal develops and is kept alive on small, low budget, marginally profitable labels like Combat and Megaforce. Fan magazines and constant touring, not hit singles, break the word on groups like Celtic Frost, who remain virtually unknown outside of metal circles.

Despite the mountain stronghold mentality of its devotees, metal clearly fits right into the rock and roll continuum. While Van Halen, and ex-VH lead singer David Lee Roth, can break out of the metal enclave into mammoth mainstream popularity, any number of rock dinosaurs have revived flagging careers by market repositioning. Bands like Status Quo, with roots in '60s English art-pop, and early '70s American stadium rockers like Kiss are grinding out metal, man, in venues around the country.

All this points to what I consider the most critical problem with heavy metal, the fact that it is a deeply conservative cultural form. The basic mold was developed almost a generation ago (when some of it was revolutionary) and has become extremely ossified. Contrast this with the kind of radical rupture represented by rap and with the hungry, yeasty ferment rap embodies now. To be fair, the last year or so has seen a very important breakthrough in metal. This is the rise of speed metal, whose star practitioners so far are Metallica and Slayer. This music is the mutant offspring resulting from the mating of traditional metal with something called hardcore, which is the linear descendent of American punk rock. Speed metal has adopted hardcore's ultrafast, headbanging velocity without, so far, picking up on its extremely explicit political and social alienation and critique. It has also taken up some of hardcore's rejection of traditional rockstar glamour and flashy styles of dressing and performing.

### White and Weird

In Part 1 of this article I identified heavy metal as the whitest strain of rock and roll around today. Its audience and practitioners are overwhelmingly white working class and middle class kids. As a conservative subculture of white youth within the multinational hodge-podge that is rock and roll in U.S. society, it can't help but have racist overtones, even if they aren't usually explicit. It's kind of hard to imagine a band called W.A.S.P. being big stars in more mainstream rock circles, for instance.

(There is one important regional exception to heavy metal's whiteness: metal has developed a sizable Chicano/Mexicano following in the Southwest. David Lee Roth, no dummy about going for the bucks, recently released a version of his new album with all the vocal tracks redone in Spanish for Latin American distribution. There is also a smallish group of Black musicians who grew up on and play metal.)

But the irony in the general pattern is that the roots of the music are deep in Black music. Jimmy Page of Zep and other first generation English metal mongers cut their musical teeth on the blues in the early '60s and filled their albums with covers of Willie Dixon and Robert Johnson classics. Today's young metal stars, like Motley Crue and Ratt, operate at one remove, covering early '70s rock tunes like Slade's "C'mon Feel the Noize" or Uriah Heep's "Easy Living," and are pretty much bone ignorant about where their favorite guitar riffs originally come from.

Mind you, this is a cultural conservatism we're talking about here. Metal's stars and lyrics are by and large not overtly reactionary. You get exceptions, of course. Stryper, whose yellow and black striped outfits make them look like heavily permed bumblebees, push "Born-Again" Christianity using bad heavy metal as a vehicle. Sammy Hagar, whose unspectacular career revived when Van Halen chose him as lead vocalist after the split with David Lee Roth, is a real flag-waving chowderhead, but his most popular venture into political statement so far has been the song "(I Won't Drive) Fifty-Five," an attack on speed limits.

Rather than political reaction, the most striking feature of metal lyrics is a fixation on death, horror, the occult, nuclear destruction, torture, decay and similar cheery thematic material which just isn't much of a current in the rest of rock and roll. Granted, this doomy/gory/mystical crap isn't especially progressive, except insofar as it carries an anti-war message, a tradition which goes back at least to Black Sabbath's "War Pigs."

So what's going on here? There are several ways to answer this. I'm going to spare you, gentle reader, the raps on the devaluation of human life in the culture of decaying class societies, the promulgation of mysticism and fatalism by the bourgeoisie, and so on. On a less lofty scale, fascination with death and horror is a common phenomenon among

teenage kids, especially males who also make up the audience for all those ketchup-spattered horror films. Part of it is reacting against the boredom of the straight life in the suburbs or stable city neighborhoods. This may be why rap records like Schooly D's "PSK, What Does It Stand For" deal with an issue like death as an immediate question—maybe I'll shoot this guy—whereas metal tends to do it at one remove—here's a number about Viking berserkers chopping each other up with battle axes.

Another socio-psychological benefit is that it serves as yet another barrier to parents, teachers and so on who can pretty much be counted on to be appalled by bands with names like Megadeth and Impaler, let alone their album covers and lyrics. Never forget that defying and alienating the older generation, the straight world, is one of the most important functions of rock and roll for teenagers. It is for rap as well as metal.

### Common Threads

And now we're back to the common threads in rap and heavy metal. And since both are musical forms by and for adolescents, and male adolescents in particular, guess what the main thematic concern is in both of them? Right, sex, good. This has always been pretty central to rock and roll. Hey, "Work With Me, Annie" wasn't about socialized production, people.

And the take on sex in both rap music and metal is, uh, a little sexist. In fact, it's a lot sexist, reflecting and reinforcing the differential socialization of young women and men in our society, where the former tend to aspire more to be in a relationship while the latter tend primarily to be looking to get laid. There are, to be sure, plenty of metal and rap songs about eternal love and broken hearts and the like. Then there are numbers like W.A.S.P.'s "Animal (Fuck Like A Beast)" with a somewhat narrower and more immediate focus. Countless tunes advertise the musicians' amatory charms, boast of their sexual stamina and conquests, or ask, insist, beg, suggest, cajole or hint broadly that the female listeners make the two-backed beast with them. Some of the "torpedo, rocket, jackhammer" imagery in these gems defies satire.

The interesting thing is that even though professional rock and roll musicians do not, careful research



indicates, have great trouble finding potential sexual partners, there is a notable strain of sexual insecurity in both rap and heavy metal lyrics which speaks to the stressful and painful realities of coming of age for young men in our society. In rap, it takes the form of a strange passivity which often underlies the most macho of boasts. In songs like Doug E. Fresh's "La-Di-Da-Di," the rapper is the one desired by voracious girls and their mothers too, from whom he has to flee or defend himself. The dream of being pursued by women becomes a "Nightmare" in Dana Dane's beat-box hit from last year.

As for the metal muffins, the guys up there on stage singing about the kielbasi in their codpieces are also wearing skin-tight spandex, peekaboo shirts that show their nipples, fishnet stockings and massively dyed and permed hair. When a band like Motley Crue announces a concert tour, Revlon puts on another shift at the eyeliner plant. Androgyny is hardly confined to heavy metal, but no other branch of rock simultaneously reassures the sexually uncertain teenage male by wrapping ambiguity round with such simpleminded assertion of heterosexuality.

Among the best and most popular songs in the last few years have been ones which played with these macho conventions and the contradictions underlying them. A trio of rappers called U.T.F.O. cut an influential smash "Roxanne, Roxanne" in which each of the three in turn hits on Roxanne with his best pitch only to find himself shot down or stood up. Guys liked the song, because out there in real

life, they're more likely to get shot down than chased down. Young women liked it because they could share in Roxanne's triumph. In fact, half a dozen answer songs by women, including rappers calling themselves Roxanne Shante and The Real Roxanne, came out. Their success marked the firm establishment of women rappers on vinyl, a trend which has continued up to the present.

Similarly, a couple years back, Van Halen covered, nearly note for note, a wild Louis Prima medley from the early '50s "Just a Gigolo/I Ain't Got Nobody." Roth, an archetypal rock and roll hunk, moans unconvincingly how no one wants him and mocks the rock superstud pose without giving it up. The tune did well and so did the manic video that went with it.

Like the violence and doom themes, the omnipresence of sex in rap music and metal can also be relied upon to drive the adult world, authority, around the bend. Rap and heavy metal have become targets of opportunity for all sorts of anti-rock and roll crusaders, notably politicians, clergymen, school officials and newspaper editors. Most recently Run/DMC have come under extremely heavy attack because some Black youth have been involved in violent incidents at a few concerts. L.A. has seen serious gang fights at a number of clubs and shows in recent years, but when it happened at the Run/DMC concert at the Palladium, newspapers nationwide picked up the "New Violence at Rap Concert" angle. Heavy metal concerts are also attacked regularly for

promoting violence. When thirty school principals in Duluth called for the local arena to ban metal acts, the arena manager pointed out "We have ten times more trouble, more damage at hockey games."

The main attack, though, is that listening to rap and metal makes kids do bad, bad things. Jimmy Swaggart, #1 rated teevee evangelist, itemizes for us, "It fosters rebellion, alcoholism, drug addiction, illicit sex, pornography." (The astute reader will have noted what the good Reverend listed first. On a guess, it is this aspect rather than, say, some surge in teenage necrophilia which prompted arch-reactionary Adolph Coors to secretly bankroll Tipper Gore's "Washington housewives" crowd, who like to target metal bands like Twisted Sister.)

### The Def Beat

There is one final, and all-important, point of identity and intersection between rap and heavy metal—the music. The "Def Beat" of rap and the loud, solid beat underlying heavy metal are essential and defining features of the two types of music. They're what a lot of people hate about rap and metal, and they're what the young fans love most—the noise and drive and power. And they're kissing cousins. When this article was conceived, the argument for this position might have seemed strained to some who haven't paid much attention to both rap and metal.

No more. Run/DMC closed the case last fall with the perfectly nifty "Walk This Way." As young teens, Run and DMC had played the metallic hit to death when Aerosmith cut it in the early '70s. In a brilliant move, their managers Rick Rubin and Joseph Simmons recruited Aerosmith's lippy singer Steven Tyler and lead guitarist Joe Perry to play on a remake. The result? An exciting melding of metal and rap, a racial-clash-turns-into-multinational-harmony video, and far and away the biggest selling rap album ever, "Raising Hell," the first concerted breakthrough by rap to a large white rock and roll audience.

Rap has drawn freely from heavy metal and other currents in rock and roll all along, of course. What "Walk This Way" did was make that crystal clear and make it more accessible to a larger white audience. And there are other recent examples of rap/metal commonality, like the signing of Slayer to

the rap record label of Def Jam. The Beastie Boys, the only big-time rap group made up of white performers, have a growing following among both Black youth and white rockers. For its part, that great aging beast rock and roll has proven itself able, once again, to draw from and make use of new musical trends, as it did with reggae in the '70s. Joan Jett's new album features a number written by and performed with Scorpio, one of Grandmaster Flash's original Furious Five. Bob Dylan makes a cameo appearance on Kurtis Blow's new disk. And so it goes.

For the record, of course, I'm not hailing the millenium here, or even the second coming of Motown. Most heavy metal fans will no doubt continue to despise or ignore rap, which won't be too hard considering the cold shoulder it is generally given by radio, MTV, record companies, the rock press, etc. And not all rappers are so eager to embrace mainstream rock or make cross-over moves. Schooly D., for instance, cut a crunchy little number called "I Don't Like Rock and Roll." He doesn't, and he doesn't like the "long-haired mothers" (a concise description of your typical metal fan) who do.

Nope, there's no millenium in heavy metal or rap or even in crossbreeding them. It's only rock and roll, fueled by teenage energy, frustration and hormones, banging along, banging into various social boundaries and constraints, bouncing off some and breaking down others, and making a lot of first rate noise in the process.

### Yes, You Too Can Be A Big Time Rock Critic!!

*LocoMotion* needs your help. The next edition of this column will take a look back at 1986. What we need is for a bunch of readers to pick a record, a song, an event, whatever, from last year and write a few paragraphs about it. It can be something you liked, something you hated, something you thought was an important development or a weird one. Send your short in to *LocoMotion*, c/o Forward Motion and do it pronto. If this scheme works, you'll see your deathless prose in print in this column next time.

An example of rap/metal commonality is RUN-DMC's remake of "Walk This Way" with Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler and lead guitarist Joe Perry.



James Hamilton